

NEWS IN SUMMARY

Caledonian acquires Laker base

British Caledonian Airways said yesterday it has acquired Laker Airways' engineering and maintenance base at Gatwick airport. It was not clear how the move would affect Sir Freddie Laker and Laker's plans for a "people's airline".

Police 'sus' law plea to Lords

The Metropolitan Police is to seek leave to appeal to the House of Lords over a recent High Court ruling that it is illegal to continue with prosecutions against people charged before the "sus" law was repealed last August.

Co-op hunt ban denounced

The Co-operative Wholesale Society's decision to ban hunting on its 38,000 acres of farmland was criticised yesterday by hunting organizations.

Vandals derail chemical train

Eight wagons of a train carrying dangerous chemicals were derailed in Ebbw Vale, Merseyside, on Thursday night because nuts and bolts had been removed from the track, British Rail said yesterday.

Cosmetics firm is fined £100

A & F. Pears Ltd., the cosmetics company, was fined £100 and ordered to pay £1,500 costs at Crown Court yesterday for four months after they had been convicted under the Trade Description Act of misleading customers by selling double-skinned cream in double-skinned jars.

Patient's move starts strike

A 24-hour strike was staged by nursing and ancillary staff at Tooting Bec psychiatric hospital in south London, yesterday, in protest at the transfer of a patient they say is violent.

World Cup date for Keegan case

A civil action involving Kevin Keegan, the England football captain, was yesterday set for July 1, when the World Cup will be taking place in Spain. Mr Keegan is suing Public Eye Enterprises, of Town Centre House, Merion Centre, Leeds. The company is counter-suing Mr Keegan, and Mr Justice Hensley Swales, Mr Justice Michael Davies, in the High Court, gave Mr Keegan's application to apply to the court to be changed.

ACROSS THE WEEK

- 1 To show 'sus' aged 18, 'I'm not who entered'
- 2 Scene-shed as a visitor, 'I'm not who entered'
- 3 Michael 'sus' appeal to out of sh
- 4 Unpleasant to remain in round 1th, 'I'm not who entered'
- 5 Pen 'sus' appeal to out of sh
- 6 2nd art Home Office, design 'sus' appeal to out of sh
- 7 Job in 'sus' appeal to out of sh
- 8 Very open discussion of 'sus' appeal to out of sh
- 9 Filer taking 'sus' appeal to out of sh
- 10 Lettish sort of 'sus' appeal to out of sh
- 11 Gang from 'sus' appeal to out of sh
- 12 Fly back from 'sus' appeal to out of sh
- 13 Go on holiday 'sus' appeal to out of sh
- 14 'Sus' appeal to out of sh
- 15 Cleaning this 'sus' appeal to out of sh
- 16 Hostile soldier, 'sus' appeal to out of sh

DOWN

- 1 Stem Jack's way 'sus' appeal to out of sh
- 2 After a month, 'sus' appeal to out of sh
- 3 One has dug in 'sus' appeal to out of sh
- 4 Traps a saucy lion, 'sus' appeal to out of sh

Jobless get taste of adventure with the forces

By Henry Stanhope, Defence Correspondent

The Ministry of Defence is to offer adventure training courses for up to 10,000 young people this summer, to help combat the boredom of unemployment. The £1.5m scheme will be funded from the defence budget.

Whitehall sources last night denied that service chiefs have opposed the idea, details of which are due to be announced by Mr John Nott, Secretary of State for Defence, next week. But Mr Nott was said to be displeased about yesterday's leak which rather upstaged his prepared disclosure.

The scheme which will involve courses lasting two or three weeks with one of the three services was originally part of a package prepared by the forces under the Youth Opportunities Programme last year.

The initiative then came to nothing, because of disagreement over financing and political suspicion that the ministry was trying to introduce a form of national service for the jobless.

The present exercise avoids such criticism by offering no military instruction. It is also entirely voluntary, and those interested will be able to apply through their local service recruiting office.

Nor is it solely for the unemployed. Although it is hoped that jobless youngsters in Britain's big cities will take advantage of the opportunity, those who are already working and others who are in between school and further education can also apply.

The training will consist of instruction in outdoor pursuits such as canoeing, sailing and orienteering. The Army will run two-week courses in the Scottish Highlands, the Royal Air Force two-week sessions in Yorkshire and the West Midlands, while those with the Royal Navy will spend three

weeks in and out of water at Portsmouth, including a week with the Royal Marines on Dartmoor.

The services were unenthusiastic about the idea when it was first proposed, because they feared it would divert too much of their resources and their time, but the more they thought about it, the keener they became. General Sir Edwin Bramall, Chief of the General Staff, was among those who were said to be disappointed by the Government's failure to get the scheme into operation.

The services now find themselves with spare training facilities because more soldiers, sailors and airmen are rejoining their commitments during the recession. Relatively few recruits are passing through the training depots.

That was illustrated by the latest manpower figures released by the ministry yesterday, which showed that recruiting of servicemen and women between April and December last year was less than half that during the same period in 1980.

The ministry has said that continued control of recruiting will be necessary for the time being, to save the 15,000 jobs ordered in last summer's defence review.

The number of people leaving the forces went down by a quarter between April and December, while the outflow of 7,221 between September and the end of the year was the lowest since the end of conscription.

The turnover of officers actually went up during the same period, partly because the forces are still seeking high quality leaders.

Total strengths on December 31 were: Royal Navy, 66,113; Royal Marines, 7,928; Army, 165,682; Royal Air Force, 91,850; Total, 331,573.

Leading article, page 5

Army told to expect cut in overseas allowances

By Our Defence Correspondent

Soldiers in the British Army of the Rhine and West Berlin have been warned to brace themselves for what will be seen as the first of a series of cuts in their local overseas allowances (LOAs) are to be reduced.

The figure has not been decided, but it is understood the reduction could be greater than 25 per cent.

The allowances, which were high for many years, were cut substantially in 1975 as the gap between the cost of living in the two countries narrowed.

In 1977, when a cut of between 30 and 40 per cent was justified, the ministry was so afraid of provoking discontent among troops already unhappy about their pay rise that it decided to leave the allowances as they were. The proposed reductions could mean a 15 per cent drop in the net pay of many servicemen.

Whitehall officials are acutely embarrassed by this latest round of cuts in what most of the 65,000 servicemen and women in West Germany regard as one of the prime

prerequisites of living abroad. Those already serving there have been advised to "review their spending patterns and to be prepared to make economies where possible", according to a spokesman last night. New arrivals should "be advised to arrive with long-term commitments until more detailed information on the new rates of LOA is available".

Ministers would prefer to release the new levels, along with the next forces pay rise, due on April 1, on the grounds that a pay rise, however modest, might lessen discontent.

But officials believe that high unemployment has made servicemen reluctant to leave the forces, and the strength of sterling against European currencies is one of the reasons given for the latest reduction.

Examples of existing daily LOAs for single servicemen are: major, £4.4; lance-corporal, £3.2; lance-corporal, £1.71; married rates, major, £7.96; warrant officer, class 2, £5.79; lance-corporal, £5.30.

RIPPON IN CALL FOR FREEDOM

By Our Political Correspondent

The Government's failure to carry out a manifesto commitment to discuss a Bill of Rights was last night underlined by Mr Geoffrey Rippon, the former Cabinet minister, in an address at Kent University.

Mr Rippon, Conservative MP for Hexham, said: "Respect for fundamental freedoms and recognition of the civil and political rights of the individual is basic to the concept of the rule of law in a free society."

But he said the executive had bitten deep into such rights with retrospective legislation, and arbitrary law enforcement on private property, such as the 1977 Nationalization of the aircraft and ship-building industries.

Mr Rippon said that the case for a Bill of Rights had been widely supported and his own party had pledged all-party discussions, but these were still awaited.

Mr Geoffrey Rippon: Bill of Rights urged

Adoption of the European Convention on Human Rights had also been thwarted even though the United Kingdom was the only remaining signatory which had neither incorporated it into domestic law nor introduced a human rights charter.

People's grievances were now using the court in Strasbourg to defend their rights but this was no substitute for the exercise of Parliament's traditional sovereignty.

Oil saving disputed by lead additive firm

By Pearce Wright, Science Editor

The controversy over lead in petrol intensified yesterday when the manufacturer of the organic lead compound added to motor fuels replied to critics.

Associated Ocel, which is owned entirely in Britain by BP, Shell, Mobil, Texaco and Chevron, rebutted an analysis showing that the use of unleaded petrol would save nearly 400,000 tonnes of oil a year in the United Kingdom.

That analysis was produced last night by Friends of the Earth, one of the organisations supporting the new campaign for lead-free air. However, the argument about the technical benefits of lead-free petrol is delicately balanced, because it recognizes that a smaller proportion of premium grade petrol can be obtained from a barrel of oil in an unleaded refinery.

That drawback is said to be offset because unleaded petrol gives the motorist a better mileage to the gallon, there is



Simon Davy, aged three, looks with awe at the giant figure he met on a London street yesterday. Known as Dr B, the figure is the new fatherly character chosen by Dr Barnardo's to replace Bobby B, who used to stand on the charity's collecting boxes.

Tape trial detective suspended

By Stewart Tisdler, Crime Reporter

A detective constable was yesterday under investigation by Scotland Yard's complaints investigation bureau after a tape recording was played at a Central Criminal Court trial.

The trial was stopped and last night the Yard confirmed that Detective Constable Peter Bignold, of J Division in east London, had been suspended.

Constable Bignold was giving evidence in the trial of Mr John Goodwin, a businessman, aged 39, of Bishop's Cleeve, Hertfordshire, who denied a conspiracy to burglarise a bank in east London in 1978.

After part of a tape-recording, made some months ago, of a microphone hidden in a Christmas tree at a Harford, shire house, was played in court, the prosecution offered no evidence and the jury was ordered to acquit Mr Goodwin.

In the witness box Constable Bignold listened to an extract from the tape and then refused to answer questions. He had earlier been told by Judge Neil McKinnon, QC, that he need not answer anything which might incriminate him.

Mr Goodwin was produced by the defence, who told the jury that the recording had been made last December. Mr Goodwin was present with Constable Bignold and a detective inspector.

When he asked Constable Bignold to confirm it, Bignold refused to answer.

Embarrassment deepens over Amersham sale

By Anthony Bevis, Political Correspondent

Whitehall's intense embarrassment over the sale of Amersham International increased yesterday with deepening confusion over whether a formal inquiry should be made into the deal.

Senior sources suggested that the Prime Minister was indeed embarrassed by reports that £20m profit had been made at the taxpayer's expense and that in such circumstances, an internal inquiry would naturally follow.

It was stated, therefore, that an inquiry could be expected in both the Treasury and the Department of Energy to discover why the financial went so badly wrong and what lessons could be learnt.

But Whitehall later backtracked when it was interpreted to mean that the Prime Minister had either asked for or would even receive a report.

For it was revealed that Mr

Jeers greet plan for dockland housing

By David Nicholson-Lord

The first big private housing development in the Government's plans to revitalise London's docklands was opened yesterday to the unpromising accompaniment of boos, jeers and prolonged bar-racking.

Local council tenants joined about 50 left-wing demonstrators, including two Labour MPs, in a protest at the visit of Mr Michael Heseltine, Secretary of State for the Environment, to open a new housing estate at Beckton Park, near the old Royal Docks in Newham. About 600 houses are being built there, six miles from the City and advertised as bargains at between £18,000 and £28,000.

But demonstrators were unimpressed by Mr Heseltine's declaration that the houses represented a "dramatic new opportunity" for local people. Most people on the Newham waiting list, they said, would not be able to afford them.

Mr Gillian Hopes, secretary of a Newham council tenants' federation, said: "We cannot even afford to pay our rents, let alone £19,000 for a one-bedroom flat here. After what this government has done to London, I think it is disgraceful that Mr Heseltine has the cheek to show his face in Newham, especially to open these rubbish flats."

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Science report How nature can help to produce 'acid rain'

By the Staff of "Nature"

Two meteorologists have calculated that natural causes can lead to higher acidities of rainwater than were previously thought possible. They say that "acid rain" may not be entirely the result of burning coal and oil in industrial centres.

It has generally been thought that the acidity (pH) of "pure" rainwater has an upper limit of about pH 5.6, and that higher acidities (lower pH values) are largely due to the industrial release of gaseous sulphur dioxide, which later forms atmospheric sulphuric acid. That assumption is based on calculations of the extent to which natural sulphur compounds contribute to atmospheric sulphuric acid. Those calculations have tended to assume that there is a uniform global distribution of naturally produced sulphuric acid.

However, Dr R. J. Charlson and Dr R. Rodhe, from the International Meteorological Institute, Stockholm, now argue that the natural sulphur cycle can produce large geographical and temporal variations in the amounts of the sulphur compounds which determine the natural acidity of rainwater. Global averages of natural sulphur concentrations may therefore be misleading in the evaluation of the cause of acid rain at particular locations.

The additional natural acidity considered by Dr Charlson and Dr Rodhe comes from compounds such as sulphur dioxide, from volcanic emissions, and dimethyl sulphide, produced by biological activity on the surface layer of the ocean. The distribution of such sources is obviously not uniform over the globe. Furthermore, there is a lack of uniformity in the rate of removal by clouds of sulphate aerosol, to which the natural sulphur compounds break down before forming sulphuric acid.

Allowing for these factors Dr Charlson and Dr Rodhe calculate that average pH values of about 5.6 can occur in unpolluted regions. Indeed, the natural pH of rainwater could be as low as 4.5, depending on the rate of removal by clouds of sulphate aerosol, to which the natural sulphur compounds break down before forming sulphuric acid.

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Universities fail to gain grant improvements

By Diana Geddes, Education Correspondent

The University Grants Committee (UGC) yesterday completed in all but a handful of cases its consideration of requests by universities for changes in their allocation of grant and student numbers up to 1983-84. Fewer than a dozen universities have won modifications, some amounting to no more than £50,000.

It is believed that Salford is the only university to get a virtual promise of an extension of the time-scale for its cuts. Its application for an extension of from three to five years for the cuts has been rejected, but the UGC says in a letter it is "minded to agree to an extension of the final run-down period to four years, with grants for 1982-83 and 1983-84 increased accordingly."

Salford was told last July that by 1983-84 its grant would be cut by 40 per cent, the largest cut for any university.

When he appeared in court again on January 11, Judge Slot criticized the reports and demanded a "proper psychiatric report". Mahon had raped the girl six weeks after being released from prison, where he was sent for attempting to rape a girl aged eight.

Judge Slot said at that time: "The report I have before me is not the slightest help to me." It had described Mahon as having "a history of inadequate personal and social behaviour".

The judge said: "Here is a man with a serious record for offences of this kind and the wording of the psychiatric reports makes it appear that he knows nothing about it."

Demanding a "fuller assessment", he said: "Rape of children is in my view about as serious an offence as there is."

Yesterday Judge Slot said his comments about the report had received much publicity

Science report

How nature can help to produce acid rain

By the Staff of "Nature"

Acid rain is a natural phenomenon which has been known to occur since prehistoric times. It is caused by the reaction of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides with water in the atmosphere to form sulphuric and nitric acids. These acids then fall to the ground as rain or snow. In recent years, however, the problem of acid rain has become a major environmental concern because of the damage it can do to buildings, forests and wildlife. Scientists are now working to find ways to reduce the amount of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides released into the atmosphere by factories and power stations. One of the most promising methods is the use of scrubbers, which remove these pollutants from the exhaust gases of factories and power stations before they are released into the atmosphere. Another method is the use of low-sulphur fuels, which contain less sulphur than the fuels used in most factories and power stations. If these methods are used widely, it should be possible to reduce the amount of acid rain falling on the ground and thus prevent the damage it can do.

Carrington praises Zimbabwe's stability

From Michael Hornsby Salisbury, Feb 26

Lord Carrington, the Foreign Secretary, will leave Zimbabwe tomorrow at the end of his first visit since independence, convinced of the country's stability despite the present political crisis. Speaking at a press conference tonight, flanked by Mr. Witness Mangwende, the Zimbabwe Foreign Minister, Lord Carrington said: "I think the situation here is calm. If you look at it from the outside and look at the Lancaster House constitution, Mr. Mugabe is entitled to have whom he likes in his government, and it seems to me that the situation here is stable."

Lord Carrington met Mr. Robert Mugabe, the Prime Minister, for nearly an hour and a half yesterday and for lunch today. He said Mr. Mugabe's plans for a one-party state were among subjects covered.

"He said that he thinks that in the long term a one-party state might be the right answer for Zimbabwe, but there is no question of doing it against the wishes of the people of Zimbabwe or of doing it against the constitution or in an unconstitutional way. If you look at the constitution you will see what that means," Lord Carrington said.

Asked for his view of Zimbabwe since independence, Lord Carrington replied that despite inevitable troubles and difficulties there had been "remarkable progress if you look at it in the round". He acknowledged that there was "some unease in the white population here at the present time, probably most amongst skilled craftsmen".

He had also mentioned to Mr. Mugabe "the anxiety felt in some quarters in my country and elsewhere about detention without trial, particularly of Mr. (Wally) Sturgesford, (the white MP belonging to Mr. Ian Smith's Unionist Front party)".

The only subjects which seem to have caused discord during Lord Carrington's two-day visit were the level of British aid, which the Zimbabweans would like to see increased, and the West's approach to the Namibia issue, where Mr. Mangwende accused Britain and other countries of pandering to the whims of South Africa.

The central committee of the Patriotic Front party meets tomorrow in a critical session which should resolve questions over the leadership of Mr. Joshua Nkomo (Stephen Taylor writes).

The meeting, arising from the Cabinet last week, will also decide whether the two remaining Patriotic Front members of the Cabinet should resign. Of the four who survived the purge, one has resigned and the other has indicated he will stay.

There is considerable internal debate over the leadership and the radical faction, which maintains that the leadership has deviated from socialist principles and is concerned with feathering its nest. Despite regional differences, this group probably has more in common with the ruling Zanu (PF) party of Mr. Mugabe.

However, lacking focus and with no alternative of sufficient stature, Mr. Nkomo is likely to retain the presidency and convince the party to maintain a united front.

Rebels in Chad claim victory

Paris.—The Chad rebel group, the Armed Forces of the North (FAN), said they had never lost control of the strategic central town of Oum Hadjer, which the Government said it had recaptured and held for four days until Thursday.

The FAN representative in Europe said the Government troops were ambushed, losing 417 men killed, 414 captured, and a number wounded. They abandoned much equipment.

The organization of African Unity (OAU) had intended to implement a ceasefire between the two sides tomorrow. It has been rejected by the government with the rest of a timetable leading to elections and a definitive government by the end of June.

Turkish regime swoops on peace activists

From Rasit Gurdilek, Ankara, Feb 26

The leading members of the Turkish section of an international left-wing peace organization were rounded up today by the authorities. Turkey's military rulers have issued a number of restrictions recently, apparently an attempt to improve their image abroad, where there has been much criticism of their human rights record.

Among the 42 leaders of the Peace Association against whom arrest warrants were issued were the Turkish section president, Mr. Mahmut Dikerdem, a former ambassador, and Mr. Orhan Apaydin, the chairman of the Istanbul Bar Association. Mr. Apaydin is also the principal defence lawyer of the 52 leaders of the left-wing Progressive Trade Unions Confederation (DISK), who are on trial for their role in the September 1980 coup.

Also included were Mr. Ali Sirmen, foreign policy analyst of the left-wing daily Cumhuriyet, Mr. Niyazi Dalyanci, owner of an Istanbul-based news agency, another liberal journalist, four former social democrat deputies, a poet, two engineers, and a doctor.

Another is Mrs. Reha Isvan, the wife of the former Mayor of Istanbul, Mr. Ahmet Isvan, who has been in custody since the Army coup of September 1980 on charges of helping DISK to organize the May Day parade in 1977, at which 36 people died.

In a written statement issued before he gave himself up in Istanbul, Mr. Apaydin claimed that the arrests were ordered simply to prevent the death penalty for 186 of the 574 leading members of the underground Dev-Yol (Revolutionary Road) organization, the largest extreme left-wing group in Turkey.

Presenting the 1,319-page indictment today, the military prosecutor said the defendants were responsible for 333 murders and a wide range of terrorist offences. He said their aim was to "overturn the constitutional order by force, and replace it with a Marxist-Leninist state, through the strategy of people's war".

The prosecutor asked for prison terms of eight to 36 years for the rest of the defendants. The trial is expected to begin in the summer.

Among those facing the death penalty are four leaders who were listed as having died under torture in the latest report by Amnesty International. The four, together with four others who had been listed as dead, were recently presented to the press.

Mr. Bulent Ecevit, the former Turkish Prime Minister, was ordered today to appear before a civil court on charges of insulting a provincial police chief in June, 1980 (Reuters reports).

Bonn ministers deny bribery allegations

Bonn, Feb. 26. — Two senior Cabinet members and a close aide of Herr Helmut Schmidt, the West German Chancellor, are being investigated on suspicion of bribery, the justice authorities said today.

The prosecutor's office said that the investigation involved three other politicians, one a former minister, and senior executives of the Flick concern, a private holding company with interests in steel, engineering and munitions.

The Cabinet men named were Herr Hans Matthöfer, the Finance Minister and a member of Herr Schmidt's Social Democratic Party (SPD), and Count Otto Lambsdorff, the Economics Minister and a Free Democrat.

The prosecutor's office said that they and Herr Schmidt's Chancellorery Secretary, Herr Manfred Lahnstein, together with the other politicians, had all dealt officially with requests by the Flick for tax concessions.

A decision on whether to press charges would be taken once the investigation was completed. "Further details cannot be disclosed to avoid compromising the investigations," it said.

In a statement issued by his ministry, Herr Matthöfer recalled a report a last December by Herr Schmidt's news magazine which alleged that Flick had donated DM50,000 (about £11,360) to him for the SPD.

The report, which Herr Matthöfer denied at the time, linked the donation with government approval for relief of tax on investments of proceeds from a DM200m shares sale.

"What is correct is that not even the possibility of such a donation... was ever mentioned to me," he said today.

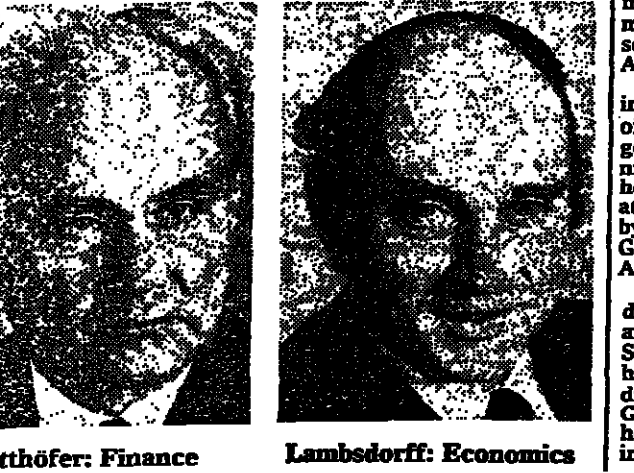
An equally forceful denial came from Count Lambsdorff, who is visiting the United States, and who was quoted by his ministry as saying that the allegation was completely untenable. His statements were endorsed by Herr Lahnstein, the government spokesman, who told a news conference that Bonn saw no reason for the Ministers or Herr Lahnstein to resign.

The investigations, among the widest ever launched against Bonn politicians, were less than 24 hours after one of the industrialists on the list announced he had resigned as president-elect of the West German Industry Confederation (BDI).

Herr Eberhard von Brauchitsch, a Flick deputy chairman, said in a letter passed to the press that he understood a possible link was being investigated between company donations and its investment of proceeds from selling shares in the Daimler-Benz company in early 1976.

Other company executives named by the prosecutor were Dr. Friedrich Karl Flick, the executive chairman and Herr Manfred Lahnstein, board member of a Flick subsidiary, Herr Hans Friedrichs, the foreign Economics minister who was succeeded by Count Lambsdorff in 1977 and who is now head of the Dresdner Bank, was also under investigation, the prosecutor's office said.

The two remaining politicians named were Herr Horst-Ludwig Rieken, former FDP state economics minister in North Rhine-Westphalia, and Herr Rudolf Eberle, the present state economics minister in Baden-Württemberg. — Reuters.



Matthöfer: Finance Lambsdorff: Economics

Polish party told to stop bickering

From Roger Boyes, Warsaw, Feb 26

Mr. Mieczyslaw Rokowski, the Deputy Prime Minister, has appealed for an end to bickering in the Polish Communist Party, in a speech to the party's two-day plenary session in Warsaw.

He said: "If substantive discussions are replaced by undermining actions, innuendoes and nebulous suggestions, as well as libel, then the much-delayed unity will not come. My view is that such practices are out of place in our party."

That comment, and indeed much of the speech, seems aimed at rebutting criticism voiced by Central Committee members during the meetings.

The criticism centred on three points: the need for the party to take a more aggressive stance in the country; the need to purify its ranks by purging careerists who joined in the 1970s; and the lack of consultation between the Government leadership and the party over the draft discussion paper on the shape of trade unions.

It is understood that some Central Committee members only learned of the union proposals after an interview in *The Times* with the Trade Minister Stanislaw Ciolek, who was picked up and broadcast to Poland by Western radio stations a week before the guidelines were officially published.

Mr. Rokowski emphasized that there had been adequate consultation, that the quest for ideological purity should be tempered and that the main unifying point for the party should be a front for national understanding.

Apart from General Wojciech Jaruzelski, the Polish leader, who delivered a summing up speech that struck similar tones, Mr. Rokowski was the most senior speaker at the plenum, at least as far as the official press account is concerned.

Mr. Rokowski is a prominent liberal reformer within the party.

Meanwhile the Catholic Church in Poland has been searching for a new strategy or at least a new way of portraying and implementing the old one. The persistent dilemma facing the Polish Episcopate, which met yesterday and today, has been how to maintain criticism of the martial law regime while not pushing General Jaruzelski too hard.

The result of the plenum — which showed General Jaruzelski firmly in the saddle but an increasing noisy hard-line chorus in the lower reaches of the Central Committee — has probably reinforced the view in the Episcopate that the church must proceed cautiously, aiming criticism only at specific targets such as the regime as a whole.



Wine war tops Rome agenda

President Mitterrand, preceded by agenda was the six-month old "wine war", which began when Italian wine exports were delayed by French customs procedures, and later banned. This dispute has led to fears in Italy that France might adopt a protectionist policy in other areas, such as shoes, furniture and electrical goods.

'Sacrifice' theory at coup trial

From Richard Wigg Madrid, Feb 26

General Alfonso Armada, accused of plotting last year's attempt to overthrow Spanish democracy, was presented by the defence today as the man who sacrificed himself to rescue 350 MPs held at gunpoint.

An impressive procession of 10 generals present at Army headquarters on the coup night testified in written evidence in favour of the conduct of General Armada, then deputy Spanish Army chief. They supported his claim to have obeyed superior orders throughout.

"In this situation there has got to be a sacrifice and it is going to be by me," General Armada was alleged to have declared in the generals' written evidence called by Señor Ramon Hermosilla, read out at the court martial today.

This was allegedly after receiving a telephone call from Lieutenant-General Jaime Milans del Bosch, the former Captain General in Valencia, who is said to have suggested that General Armada should propose himself to the MPs to head a government of national salvation in a negotiated settlement with Lieutenant-Colonel Antonio Tejero, who was occupying Parliament.

Ascribing the idea to General Milans brought a new turn in this trial where most of the accused have sought to blame General Armada.

The defence evidence was inconclusive on the key point of whether General Armada's going to Parliament that night was his decision or if he had been authorized to attempt a personal initiative by Lieutenant General José Gabaldon, the then Spanish Army chief.

The evidence today left no doubt that King Juan Carlos and Lieutenant General Sabino Fernandez Campos, head of the royal household, disapproved of the idea of General Armada offering to head a coalition government in the King's name.

West rejects Israeli media accusations

By Our Foreign Staff

The BBC and *The New York Times* have rejected accusations by the Israeli Government that they have distorted their coverage of the Middle East because of Arab threats against their correspondents.

The BBC told *The Times* that despite the difficulties of working in the Middle East, it had never suppressed news because it feared the consequences of broadcasting it nor had it broadcast items in order to appease a particular party.

In New York Mr. Craig Whitney, deputy foreign editor of *The New York Times*, said that no story was ever suppressed by the newspaper in order to protect a reporter, and he knew of no occasion on which a story was suppressed by a reporter.

"I sincerely doubt that any correspondent of ours has ever suppressed a news story that he knew about," he said.

The campaign launched recently by the Israeli Government alleges double standards by Western news organizations in their reporting of events in Israel and the occupied territories, compared to events in the Arab world, particularly Lebanon and Syria.

The BBC said there was no evidence to support speculation that threats against Mr. Tim Llewellyn, its former Middle East correspondent, had been planned by Syrian organizations.

The corporation withdrew Mr. Llewellyn from the region in the summer of 1980 because of the threats to his life, the spokesman said, and had since been replaced by a new Middle East correspondent who was based in Nicosia.

The Foreign Press Association which represents more than 200 journalists and photographers based in Israel took a front page advertisement in the English-language *Jerusalem Post* to express concern about the implications of the government's campaign.

This unusual step was taken after a speech in the Knesset during which Dr. Eliahu Ben-Elissar, chairman of the foreign affairs and defence committee, appealed to the association to join "the struggle for freedom of reporting and coverage, for an end to toadyism and submission".

On Thursday there were incidents on the Golan Heights when Israeli troops clashed with reporters and cameramen attempting to cover the barricading of four Druze Arab villages.

Army road blocks seal off disputed Sinai town

From Christopher Walker Jerusalem, Feb 26

Army road blocks were put up around the Sinai settlement of Yamit this afternoon to prevent militant Jews from moving into the town which is to be handed back to Egypt on April 26.

The barricades were reported to have been taken down less than two hours later, after protests from local people.

Mrs. Ela Weizman, a leader of the Stop the Withdrawal from Sinai Campaign said in a telephone interview that soldiers manning the road blocks prevented all non-residents from entering the area. At one stage, she said, scores of cars were held up.

"We then had some hard words with the general on the spot and explained that many religious people were coming to visit for the Sabbath. We also issued a statement to Israeli television saying that we would resist the attempt to stop outsiders coming to visit."

At the Army spokesman's office in Tel Aviv, there was confusion about the operation, which was to prevent a mass incursion to protesters into Sinai over the next three weeks. According to the organizers, some 3,000 Jews are planning to arrive in the area from 37 settlements in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

While the state-controlled Israel radio was reporting at 6pm that the barricades had been lifted, quoting a senior officer on the spot who described the episode as a misunderstanding, the Army spokesman was saying the barricades were still in place and the operation was continuing.

Tonight the protesters were hailing the brevity of the operation as another victory in their campaign to oppose the April pull-back.

"We are continuing with our plans to oppose the retreat, just as before," Mrs. Weizman said.

We will not tolerate the idea of the Army discriminating who can and cannot come here. That is what happened to the Jews in the ghettos 40 years ago when they were forced to wear yellow badges."

Paris and Bonn put London in the cold

From Jonathan Fenby Paris, Feb 26

The agreement between France and West Germany reached at summit talks here on Thursday on ways to protect Europe from the impact of high American interest rates has tended to isolate Britain in the European Community.

The French look on the agreement between President François Mitterrand and Herr Helmut Schmidt as a key test of commitment to the EEC, which want European nations to pledge themselves to the idea that they should keep their currencies stable whatever happens as a result of American interest rates.

One idea being floated in Paris is that companies wanting to raise money should float capital issues in the European currency unit, the ECU, a special money.

The interest rate question is part of a much wider issue of European unity on which Britain is seen as being increasingly isolated. French official sources talked of "a certain egocentricity" in Britain's attitude. The joint declaration spoke of the need to rise above national interests, which is seen here as appointed reference to Britain's concern about its budgetary contribution to the EEC.

Britain is regarded by the French Government as the main obstacle to Community unity on a whole range of issues, ranging from the interest rate war with America to farm prices. The palmy days of the Mitterrand-Thatcher summit of last September, when France seemed to be seeking a renewal of friendly relations with Britain, a now dead, instead, France is seeking to build on the very close relations with West Germany which resulted from the summit meeting here.

The first attempt to convert the understanding on interest rates into a Community-wide agreement was expected to be made yesterday in Rome, where M. Mitterrand began talks with Italian leaders. Other EEC member governments are expected to be contacted rapidly. The Franco-German relationship, evident at the meetings between M. Mitterrand and Herr Schmidt on Wednesday and Thursday is expected to be the cornerstone of European unity.

Britain is now being presented as the principal obstacle to this. The French hope that British attempts to hold down farm prices in the current round of talks will be rejected by other European nations. They are encouraged by the statement issued by Herr Schmidt which stresses that farm price questions must be separated from issues of how much each country pays to the European budget. Britain has in the past sought to hold down food prices to the cost of European policies.

Formal Franco-German proposals on interest rates will probably be made at a meeting of Finance Ministers of the EEC on March 15 and 16 in Brussels. There are clear problems in the way of establishing an effective joint approach. Both Paris and Bonn are anxious to maintain a good working relationship with Washington and do not want differences over interest rates to get in the way of broader understanding.

Bonn, for its part, is against any form of control of capital movements as the German delegation made clear here. While, in the background, there are fears that M. Mitterrand's crusade to reconquer France's domestic market from importers might lead to protectionist policies.

Corsica law

Paris.—An Opposition challenge to the law passed last month, giving Corsica a wide measure of autonomy, has been rejected by the Constitutional Court, which did not agree that the principle of the indivisibility of the French state was infringed.

However, it objected to four articles in the wider decentralization law affecting metropolitan France. M. Gaston Gervais, the Minister of the Interior, said this involved only a technicality which would not prevent promulgation of the law in a few days.

Pretoria 'frees' journalist

Johannesburg. — Mr. Zwelakhe Sisulu, the banned black journalist, has been released after eight months' detention without trial under South Africa's Terrorism Act, the Transvaal Attorney General's office said.

The three-year banning order on Mr. Sisulu, a former president of the black Media Workers' Association of South Africa, remains in force, barring him from political and social gatherings and restricting his freedom of movement.

Parsons for Washington

Sir Anthony Parsons (above), Britain's permanent representative at the United Nations, is expected to become the new British Ambassador in Washington later this year, according to diplomatic sources. (Nicholas Ashford writes).

If the appointment is confirmed he will succeed Sir Nicholas Henderson, who was brought out of retirement to replace Mr. Peter Jay. Sir Anthony is expected to be replaced by Sir John Thomson, the High Commissioner in Delhi. Sir Anthony, who will be 60 in September, will have the distinction of being given the Foreign Service's top post abroad after reaching retirement age.

During a distinguished career he has served in Baghdad, Cairo, Khartoum, Amman, Bahrain, Ankara and Tehran.

TENTATIVE FINDINGS ON MARIJUANA

From Our Own Correspondent Washington, Feb 26

Smoking marijuana may damage health but no more than tobacco, according to the results of a 15-month study of the drug's possible health hazards.

The study, carried out by the Institute of Health of the American National Academy of Sciences, finds that although marijuana produces a variety of reversible, short-term health effects, though there is no firm permanent damage.

However, the report gives a warning to the effect that "what little we know for certain about the effects of marijuana on human health — and all that we have reason to suspect — justify serious national concern".

The most disturbing part of the report is the section dealing with marijuana smoking among school children. It shows that more than 60 per cent of high school students have smoked marijuana and that 9 per cent of them use it on a daily basis.

It says that the drug impairs memory, impairs speech and slows learning. It may also produce a range of mental responses, from euphoria to confusion or delirium — symptoms of particular concern, the report notes, because much of the heavy use of marijuana by adolescents is carried out during school hours.

NEWS IN SUMMARY

Sweeping raids in Pakistan

Islamabad.—The authorities in Pakistan, stepping up the campaign against anti-Social Elements, have arrested more than 600 people in Sind and Punjab provinces. (Hasan Akhtar writes).

Newspapers have reported a crackdown on students in a number of cities and towns and two jailbreaks in the North-West Frontier Province, in which two convicts were reported to have been shot dead by police. Many students have been rusticated.

The Duke of Edinburgh, who arrived in Karachi yesterday on a three-day visit, was received by the Sind Governor, Lieutenant-General S. M. Abbasi. The Duke is here in his capacity as president of the World Wildlife Fund.

Union leader's throat cut

Santiago. — The body of Señor Tucapel Jimenez, the Chilean civil servants' union leader, was found on the outskirts of Santiago. His throat was cut, police sources said.

Señor Jimenez recently demanded the formation of a national union to fight for the return of union freedoms in Chile where such activity is severely restricted by the Pinochet regime.

Court allows Corsica law

Paris.—An Opposition challenge to the law passed last month, giving Corsica a wide measure of autonomy, has been rejected by the Constitutional Court, which did not agree that the principle of the indivisibility of the French state was infringed.

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The semi-detached Mr Sparrow takes over the Thatcher think tank

Two weeks ago merchant banker John Sparrow was sitting in his City office when a phone call came summoning him to Downing Street. For more than five years as London personnel chief of Morgan Grenfell he had been quietly advising the Prime Minister on financial and industrial affairs. This time he was certain there could be only two reasons he might be wanted — for advice on the Laker rescue or on the winding up of De Lorean motors.

Instead, he was taken up to the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robert Armstrong, and offered the directorship of the Central Policy Review Staff, the "Think Tank", a job he did not even know was available and had certainly never considered for himself.

Yesterday, after the appointment was formally announced, Mr Sparrow admitted that he had been "totally surprised". So were other Conservative advisers. The battle to win the Prime Minister's ear is a fierce one, particularly at a time when the Government is beginning to marshal its various policy advisers.

Mr Sparrow recalls that he was first asked to give financial advice to Mrs Thatcher in opposition. He still does not know who suggested him then — or indeed for his new job. He had one interview with the opposition leader in her House of Commons office and has hardly seen her since. He has simply circulated short papers on interest rates and the financial markets — in large numbers in opposition, less frequently in government. Of the other mem-

bers of the Cabinet, he is closest to Sir Geoffrey Howe.

His political position is regarded by his friends as that of a fairly straightforward City monetarist. In his own words: "I am not a particularly political person. I like to think of myself as at least semi-detached and dispassionate. Twenty years ago I was a Conservative councillor in Ealing and considered my views perhaps closest to those of Iain Macleod. In as much as I have a political view I still think that I am a Macleod man which means, in my book, being much closer to Margaret Thatcher than to, say, Francis Pym."

John Sparrow's mild, persuasive demeanour may have appealed to the Prime Minister (his



John Sparrow: mild, persuasive

style is very like that of the outgoing Robin Ibbotson but his appointment has not pleased those who believe the Think Tank has become too dominated by the Whitehall machine to serve Mrs Thatcher's reelection.

The role of the Think Tank has never before stayed the same from one director to another. Under its first chief, Lord Rothschild, the best and brightest of industry and the Civil Service were brought together with the aim of providing an alternative voice to accepted Whitehall wisdoms. But it took a steep dive in prime ministerial popularity when Rothschild's challenged Edward Heath's "good news" speeches with a report that unless Britain stopped acting like a rich nation she would be one of the poorest in Europe by 1985.

Rothschild's successor, Sir Kenneth Berrill, was himself a civil servant, worked more closely with the Whitehall machine, but still managed to preside over the notorious Think Tank attack on the lavishness of Britain's representation overseas. Since then, however, despite important industrial work under Berrill and Ibbotson, the impact of the CPRS has been much less.

A strong right-wing strand among Mrs Thatcher's team would very much like to have used the opportunity of changing the head of the Think Tank for reviving its radical past. A Monday Club report by Graham Mather of the Institute of

Directors was by coincidence published last week. It stated that "the resources of the CPRS appear to be used in areas of marginal significance to Party and Government. Whilst it is engaged in a study on cashless pay, for example, it has apparently produced nothing on the longer term future of tripartite intervention in the economy and the future of the NEDC."

John Sparrow admitted yesterday that he had been given no guidelines by the Cabinet Secretary on how the Prime Minister wanted the CPRS to be run. He has met Robin Ibbotson only once, very briefly, and so far no others of the 20-strong team. He can be expected to keep up work on nationalized industries. At Morgan Grenfell — which will continue paying his unspecified salary with the help of a £33,000 a year contribution from the Exchequer — he was a director of Coalite, United Gas Industries and had a strong interest in the privatization of the energy sector.

He also has the same contractual arrangement as his predecessor. As one ICI analyst put it yesterday, "Men who know as much about government thinking as heads of the Think Tank become too valuable to their companies to leave in Whitehall a moment longer than necessary. Just as ICI want Ibbotson back, so will his bank want Mr Sparrow back."

But it was in the United States that the book really took off. Fuelled by unusually ecstatic reviews when it first appeared there last March, the hardback edition has sold 90,000 copies, and the American paperback has just been produced in a run of one million copies. Film rights have been sold for \$200,000. Having failed to take the Booker Prize, Thomas deserves the recognition of a Queen's Award for Export Achievement.

The *White Hotel* charts a German Jewish woman's grim journey through psychoanalysis with Sigmund Freud to the unspeakable horrors of mass extermination at Babi Yar.

Donald Thomas himself is the antithesis of his wide and bloodstained canvas. The 47-year-old son of a plasterer from Redruth, Cornwall, he wears the slightly weary look of a scholar approaching middle age, in thick black jersey and not-quite-new corduroy. The thinning grey hair is undisciplined and the face, like that of his namesake, Dylan, was probably once cherubic. Divorced, with three children, he lives quietly in a small house in a village, working as a translator of Russian poetry, when he lost his job as an English lecturer in 1978. Hereford College closed down, the victim of educational cuts. It was then that Thomas began to learn the art of writing prose.

He said: "I became the publicity officer for the campaign to keep the college open; I wrote the pamphlets and the posters. The chairman of governors was a vicar who was brilliant with his pencil; he edited my posters down to bare essentials."

He returned to New College, Oxford, where he had been an undergraduate, intending to undertake a study of the problems of translation. But he wrote *The White Hotel* instead.

"The precise moment of discovery was reading Kuznetsov's novel *Babi Yar*. I only picked it up to read on a plane journey to America. But I found myself completely absorbed by it. I had written poetry which had figured Freud on several occasions. I realized that the victims of the holocaust were, in the main, Jews. I

Roaring trade at the White Hotel

This week Penguin Books realized too that most psychoanalysts were Jews, as were their patients. From that came the realization that Freud had been imbued with the humanist beliefs of the nineteenth century, and had studied individuals with great care, in contrast to Hitler who exterminated thousands without a second thought.

What he was trying to do, Thomas says, was to touch the nerve ends of the twentieth century by finding a metaphor to connect what he sees as its two central themes, deep introspection and mass destruction.

"This is a very self-conscious age; we know we are brutes. No one at the time questioned why Genghis Khan slaughtered millions; it was just accepted. But when Hitler and Stalin did the same thing, people began to ask why."

Last year Thomas was invited to read passages from *The White Hotel* to an American Jewish audience on the fortieth anniversary of the Babi Yar massacre, but he declined.

"I felt great guilt writing about such a horrific event, and I had to satisfy myself that I was not writing it for simple commercial exploitation. Writing it was a very private thing and so should reading it be. I would be very unhappy declaiming it from a rostrum."

He feared a hostile reaction from the Jewish community when the book first appeared, but it never came. At the same time, he is not altogether surprised that America woke up to the book before England.

"Psychoanalysis is much more favourably regarded in the United States, where so many people are either analysts or analysts' patients. Americans are also much more ready to accept an unusual format, more open to something new and original. And of course there is a very large Jewish population, particularly in New York where interest was first aroused. In Britain, it requires exceptional publicity to get a serious novel going."

Recently Thomas went to Washington to undertake a semester's university teaching, but he fled home to Hereford after only two weeks. "I could not stand all the attention, the publicity and the phone calls. I cannot be the successful author of *The White Hotel*; I have to be the still-unsuccessful author of my next book."

His next is *The Improvisatore*, just off the typewriter, which is again set in Russia with a dissident poet as hero. Thomas has never been to the Soviet Union; his knowledge of Russian comes from his academic service, where he took a language course and was graded "suitable for low-level interrogation after further training". He never became an interrogator, but he discovered Russian literature.

Donald Thomas is now a wealthy man, and his accountant keeps pointing out the benefits of residence in various sunny tax havens. But, if he moves anywhere, it will be back to the rocks and the wild sea of his native Cornwall. More than any literary or commercial success, says Thomas, a writer needs his roots.

Alan Hamilton

Why Baldwin deserves his place in the House

by Julian Critchley

Two empty plinths stand in the Members' Lobby of the House of Commons.

On either side stands a statue of every modern Prime Minister until Attlee — every one, that is, except Stanley Baldwin.

There is a move to have that omission put right, but the decision will not be taken on the nod. Many Labour MPs are not keen on celebrating the Tory who presided over the General Strike and the Depression. And a number of Tories would rather reserve a place for a more maternal figure...

Baldwin as seen by Low in 1935: Baldwin deals the League of Nations a severe blow



"YOU KNOW YOU CAN TRUST ME"

Last August, while staying at my cousin's house in Somerset, I discovered a collection of 36 speeches made by Stanley Baldwin between the years 1923 and 1926, and published by Penguin Books under the title *On England*. I was entranced.

Of the 36 only four were on political subjects, the remainder ranged over a variety of subjects of immediate interest to his listeners. They were witty, learned and without rancour. Compared with the belligerence of today's politics, what a breath of fresh air they are.

Here was a Prime Minister and party leader who found time not only to indulge his own strong sense of local patriotism in his native town (Bewdley), "one came out of

this red soil, and one will return to it and lay one's bones in it", but to evoke the *genius loci* in every other place he visited and share his catholic knowledge and expertise in literature, the arts, history and institutions.

His love of the country and wild life comes out in his dedication to the bird sanctuary in Hyde Park to the memory of WH Hudson; his deep and undemonstrative religious convictions are seen in his talks on Christian ideals and religion in politics for the National Free Church conference and a Wesleyan meeting.

He described himself as "a sort of half-educated fellow who never stops learning"; but I wonder if there are any more exquisite passages in

modern English literature than are to be found in his address to the Classical Association on his debt to the classics. It was in the Roman qualities of piety and gravitas and the truth of the spoken word that he saw the foundation of European civilization.

Baldwin was three times Prime Minister, and perhaps the dominant figure in politics between the two wars; yet there is no statue or memorial to him in the Palace of Westminster. In the Members' Lobby of the Commons there are two empty plinths, the other six being occupied by Churchill, Lloyd George, Jo Chamberlain, Asquith, Bonar Law and, most recently, Attlee.

In December last year I

tabled an Early Day motion that "a statue of Stanley Baldwin be placed in the Members' Lobby," which has attracted 108 signatures. Among the sponsors of my motion are Sir Harold Wilson, Edward Heath and James Callaghan. So far, however, only three Labour MPs have signed.

Baldwin's reputation has suffered from what could be called the Churchillian interpretation of history, and it is true that relations between them were never especially close. But to accuse Baldwin of appeasement is to confuse Stanley with Neville, and to place upon the first half of the 1930s blame that properly lies upon the second.

In fact Baldwin's reputation is unassailable. It rests

upon three major achievements: he helped to turn the Labour Party from being a revolutionary party into a constitutional one; he met and overcame the challenge of the General Strike of 1926, and by his skilful handling of the Abdication crisis probably saved the Monarchy.

Of the six who already stand in the Members' Lobby, only two, Churchill and Lloyd George, can claim, by their prowess in war, to have made a greater contribution to the state.

It is disappointing that, so far at least, the Labour Party has been so ungenerous towards Baldwin. His socialist friends, like Ellen Wilkinson, are long since dead and it is true to say, that whenever references occur in

his speeches to the Labour Party, they are studiously charitable and courteous, though there was fuel for quarrels a plenty. Conciliation was his constant aim.

Baldwin held for many years a very strong place in the affections of a people of all parties, and that I am sure, was because they knew from the early days of his premiership that service to the nation was his overriding purpose.

He took his party seriously, enough to simply because he saw it as a necessary instrument to serve that purpose. This was the pervasion of a great speech of his on Democracy and the Spirit of Service which he made in December 1924 in the Albert Hall to members of the victorious Conservative Party:

"I want to see the spirit of service to the whole nation the birthright of every member of the Unionist Party, Unionist in the sense that we stand for the union of those two nations of which Disraeli spoke; union among our own people to make a nation of our own people at home, which if secured, nothing else matters in the world... You cannot better serve your party, and through your party, your country, than in dedicating your lives to that service."

Lady Lorna Howard, his daughter, tells the story of a hostel for tramps which was run privately by two old ladies in a Worcestershire village. Word spread that it would have to close. Baldwin went to his bank and put through the hostel door an envelope on which was written "from a grateful tramp".

There can be no memorial to Baldwin at Westminster without the support of Labour MPs. Conservatives and Liberals were happy to support Lord Attlee's petrification. Will Michael Foot be as generous? I shall try to persuade him when I meet him this week.

The author is the Conservative MP for Aldershot.

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Geoffrey Smith

Will Sir Geoffrey budget for a vote-winner?

As the Chancellor prepares his Budget he is once again receiving a great deal of economic advice. But what are the political pressures on him this time? One indication that they are considerable was the Prime Minister's speech this week warning that the fall in oil prices limits Sir Geoffrey's room for manoeuvre. This was a deliberate tactic to dampen expectations, which had been rising to the point where whatever the Chancellor did was in danger of seeming an anti-climax.

But despite Mrs Thatcher's essay in pessimism, the political pressures on Sir Geoffrey are still strong. First he will want to avoid a repetition of last year's fiasco in which members of the Cabinet competed in letting it be known how much they disapproved of the Budget.

Last month, when the Cabinet discussed the broad strategy of this year's Budget, it seemed that all would be well. Specific pledges were neither given nor sought, but the general impression was that his proposals would not be such as to send a shudder of horror down the spines of any of his colleagues. Every-one could relax.

Except for Sir Geoffrey, that is, who now has to justify the calm of a Cabinet in which senior Conservatives have noted a considerable measure of rising damp.

In other words, most of Sir Geoffrey's fellow Ministers will be disappointed if there is not some mild refutation.

That wish is still more pronounced on the Conservative backbenches. Opinions vary as to whether the relief should take the form of a reduction in the National Insurance Surcharge, as the CBI recommends, or in taxation, which would be the preference of the Institute of Directors if the Chancellor strays from the rectitude of a neutral Budget. Some Conservative MPs are not particularly worried about what kind of relief there should be, so long as there is some.

The party, quite simply, wants something to cheer. Many Conservative MPs are now decidedly jumpy about their chances of re-election. They want something to steady their nerves. They want to be able to say to their constituency supporters, and to wavering Conservative voters: "Look, Mrs Thatcher always warned that there would be tough times before the economy started to recover. But this is the first sign of spring. Soon summer will be here."

It may seem a little obvious, but Conservative backbenchers are not looking for any subtle messages at the moment. They also believe that a bit of mild refutation from the Government would help to cut the ground from under the Social Democrats.

Much of this sentiment can be attributed to a desire for a psychological boost after what has been a pretty trying

time for any Conservative member. But it is also based on the calculation that there is not much time left.

The electoral calendar has already begun to exercise its tyranny. According to this reasoning, the election will be held in the autumn of 1983, which leaves only two annual Budgets before the party is judged at the polls.

The voters are naturally sceptical of a particularly

generous Budget in the run-up to an election. So if the Chancellor is to offer any comfort in time for it to have electoral effect, he had better start now.

This assessment is entirely logical, but it is based on the assumption that the election must be held in autumn next year. This is now the conventional wisdom in all parties. Mrs Thatcher will hardly want to go to the country

before then, and if she waits until the last moment in the spring of 1984 she will risk being destroyed by another winter of discontent. Look what the unions did to poor Mr Callaghan, and they were supposed to be on his side.

This reasoning may seem logical enough. The last two governments were undermined by conflict with the unions: Mr Callaghan in 1979 and Mr Heath in 1974. Surely no Conservative government would want to risk reviving memories of the three-day week and the battle with the miners?

Yet it can be just as dangerous for politicians as for generals to be dominated in their thinking by the lessons of the last war. Mr Callaghan suffered so much from the winter of discontent simply because the unions were supposed to be on his side.

One of the strong points in Labour's appeal to the electorate is the claim that it is the party that knows how to manage the unions. Indeed, so much is Labour seen as the party of the unions that it usually loses support when the unions are disruptive.

even when the Conservatives are in office.

This rule did not apply in 1974 because the disruption was so far as to threaten the stability of the country. Popular resentment against the unions was replaced by fear. The dominant sentiments of the February 1974 campaign were confusion and a desire for the quiet life. If Mrs Thatcher became embroiled in a conflict that threatened once more to bring the country to a standstill, the electorate would probably again be looking for some way out of the turmoil.

But resentment against the unions is stronger now than it was then, and anything less than another conflict of that severity — a repetition of the 1978-79 winter, for example — would probably damage Labour much more than a Conservative government that gave the impression of being reasonable. These might seem to be conditions ideally suited to the SDP-Liberal alliance. In those circumstances, however, the SDP, which has been making hawkish noises about the unions, would be better

placed to eat into the Labour vote — which would satisfy the Conservatives well.

It does not follow from this that Mrs Thatcher would be wise to opt now for a 1984 election. If circumstances look favourable in the autumn of 1983 she will surely go to the country then. But she is not hemmed in by the electoral timetable so much as is often supposed. She could afford to run on into 1984 if necessary, which means that there could be two Budgets after this one before the election.

The political case for some mild refutation in this Budget is not that time is running out, but that the Conservative Party needs to be healed. If the refutation is more than mild, Sir Geoffrey will outpace the right, if he does not offer some refutation there just might be the odd defection to the SDP. One or two Conservative members might resign the Whip, if only for a while; and, much more probably, there would be a series of hostile Conservative amendments.

The impression would be conveyed of a party sadly at odds with itself. It is because this Budget has come to assume a symbolic importance within the party that for once it may be more important for the Chancellor to have the correct political balance than to get his economic calculations absolutely right.

Sir Geoffrey: rising damp in the Cabinet



P.O. Box 7, 200 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ. Telephone: 01-837 1234

YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU

One unfortunate effect of the proposal to offer unemployed youngsters adventure training with the armed forces under a scheme to be announced next month, is that the arguments about unemployment will become inextricably, though unwarrantably, entangled with arguments about conscription. Conscription has become a taboo word in the political vocabulary since it was abolished by Mr Macmillan and Mr Duncan Macmillan twenty five years ago. The military consequences of that decision have been obscured by the relative security which we have enjoyed in the world since then, a security costed by the self-satisfaction of the armed forces at being once again left alone with their professionalism. The social consequences of the abolition seem also to have been ignored.

The effect of abolition was to give society a feeling of liberation from something which was felt to smack of compulsion and militarism. The easygoing attitude of voluntary service which permeated the British approach to defence recruitment affected society as a whole. "Rights" now take precedence over responsibilities from the cradle through the classroom, to the shop floor and beyond. In such an age the social benefits of conscription have become only the subject of lampoons in novels or of the fashionable resentment of people who think that a nation has no need — let alone a duty — to look to its own security.

Of course the arguments are not all one way, and no politician would dream of basing his election platform on the re-introduction of conscription. Nevertheless the subject should not be examined, and should stop becoming a taboo both for social and strategic reasons, neither of which are in any way connected with the problem of unemployment. The

strategic case for re-examining the Macmillan-Sandys decision to rely solely on small professional armed forces is based on the fact that events are unpredictable and the world is an inherently unsafe place. A policy of deterrence can not be more than a major part of one's defence posture, and its credibility anyway depends on a nation's ability to meet situations created by the kind of breakdown of that deterrence. How and when such a breakdown might occur is not predictable. But we have lived in an era of total strategy for long enough now to know that an emergency, when it comes — and come it will, unless all the lessons of history are to be ignored — will have to be tackled somehow by the whole nation with all its resources, human and industrial, not just its volunteers. We maintain undermanned and overpaid armed forces which delight in their professionalism, and which refuse to contemplate a more modest but more precautionary role as a basis for expansion. Britain, alone of its European allies, relies solely on the market place to recruit enough volunteers to meet the needs of national security. This self-indulgence infects society as a whole, which feels that it has no need to worry about defence, other than to contribute to its cost through general taxation. The system, on military grounds alone, cries out for review.

The abolition of conscription was also a social tragedy. Compulsory service touched almost every family in the land and in touching them served to remind the people that the nation's defences required an effort from all her citizens however inconsequential that effort might be. Secondly with the passing of conscription an ever-dwindling proportion of the population now has knowledge of, or contact with the armed forces. This is a potentially

dangerous state of affairs. It could lead to an alienation between the rest of the population and a tiny coterie of professional military men. The third reason is that universal military service provided a turnstile through which everybody had to pass — butcher, baker, candlestick maker, duke, don and doctor. That system provided some cement in a society only too notorious for its stratifications. It provided a common idiom for people of many different classes, accents and aspirations. Societies lose such a communal identity at their peril.

We would not suggest here that only some kind of military service should be reintroduced; but that the subject should certainly be reexamined in the context of arrangements for some compulsory and universal service which contained a military option, such as occurs, for instance, in France. A short period of compulsory youth service, civilian or military, should not be seen as a palliative to youth unemployment, nor discussed in those terms. It should be seen as an innovation which could help re-create a feeling of community and national identity which threatens to slip away from this country except on rare moments of public enthusiasm. Liddell Hart, that great strategist, abhorred conscription, as one would expect of somebody who was passionately devoted to professionalism. Napoleon, on the other hand, said it "is the vitality of a nation". The subversive effects of inflation, a diminishing sense of social responsibility, and years of diffident leadership have all conspired to loosen the cement in Britain's brick work. A debate about the need for young people to be conscripted in the service of their country, in a choice of tasks which would be either civil or military, might help put that cement back where it belongs.

NO NEED TO RULE ALL THE AIR WAVES

The Government is expected shortly to announce its plans for a British satellite which would provide two extra television channels within five years, and it is thought likely that both these channels will go to the BBC. If that is the Home Secretary's decision, it will be easy to understand the reasons. The BBC gives the impression at the moment of being under capable management; it is eager to have the extra channels and it knows what it wants to do with them. It proposes to use one channel largely though not solely for repeat programmes and the other for a subscription service which the BBC believes would be a useful earner of revenue.

There is always a natural tendency on the part of any minister to respond to proposals which are put forward with the greatest urgency and conviction. But would this further expansion really be in the best interests of the BBC itself? It is nearly thirty years since the British Broadcasting Company (as it was then called) was formed, and for more than half its life to date the BBC enjoyed a monopoly of broadcasting in this country.

That monopoly was destroyed in one field with the introduction of independent television and then in another with the coming of independent local radio. But in each

instance the BBC has given ground reluctantly. It could not prevent the birth of independent television, but it responded to that competition with the determination to secure at least fifty per cent of the viewing audience. It could not block independent local radio but it was at pains to get in first with a number of local radio stations of its own. It has responded to the prospect of independent breakfast television with plans for a BBC breakfast television service, and now when two more television channels are up for grabs it is eager to get its hands on them.

This thrust for expansion may itself be regarded as a sign of vitality. Each extension, and projected extension, of the BBC's activities can be defended on its merits. But the total effect has been to inflate the Corporation to the point where it has become too unwieldy. Nobody who was starting from scratch to plan the best pattern of broadcasting for Britain would give to one organization, no matter how high-minded or efficient, responsibility for two out of four television channels, all national and regional radio, overseas broadcasting, a share of local radio and half the breakfast television that will shortly be available — never mind about the two more television channels.

This is not an argument for

breaking up the BBC as it now exists. That would do untold damage to a service of high quality simply to fit an organizational blueprint. In any case, it would be a pretty poor blueprint that failed to link overseas broadcasting to television and radio at home because this makes it easier to sustain a position of independence from government in what could otherwise degenerate into a mere propaganda service. But the BBC will have to adjust its thinking to a world in which it can no longer hope to have a stake in every new broadcasting activity.

The Annan Committee said in its report five years ago that it regarded "the next 15 years as an interlude between two eras, in which the swan-song of the era of conventional broadcasting is likely to develop into the prelude to the era of multiplicity of telecommunication services". There are differences of opinion as to how long it will take for this new era to come along. But with satellite television becoming available, it is evident that these two new channels will not be the last additional television outlets in the years ahead. If the BBC is to perform as great a service in the future as it has in the past it will have to think what its role should be when it can have only a distinctive and not a dominating share of the market.

Budget figures

From Professor R. R. Neild and Mr T. S. Ward
Sir, Anyone who looks around can see that the standard of public services has been reduced. Even more striking is the cut in public sector investment: house building, road building and investment by the nationalized industries. Yet Professor Friedman (February 13) and others keep asserting that Mrs Thatcher and her colleagues have failed to cut public expenditure.

The facts are that public expenditure has been cut severely, but those expenditure cuts, together with the tax increases and tight monetary policies imposed by the Government, have had perverse effects. They have reduced real demand and output. That has caused big increases in public expenditure on unemployment and supplementary benefits, loans to nationalized industries and other items where the Government has had little alternative but to compensate for reduced income.

As a result, total public expenditure, boosted in this way, has increased in relation to the GDP, which has been depressed by tight fiscal and monetary policies. Critics of the Government in their own ranks look at this increase and protest. They ignore the recession and the effect of budgetary policy in causing it.

They ignore the well-established proposition that the figures for actual budgetary flows are no indication of budgetary policy because they do not differentiate between two types of change in expenditure and receipts: those caused by changes in policy, those caused by policy changes, ie, changes in tax rates, public-sector prices and expenditure programmes. The way to escape from this middle — a way which has been embraced by Professor Friedman in the past — is to use a measure which explicitly adjusts public expenditure and receipts for variations in GDP from a growth path consistent with constant employment. On that basis, public expenditure in relation to (constant employment) GDP, which stood at 49.5 per cent in 1975, was down to 45.5 per cent by 1978 and has been reduced by the present Government to 42 per cent in 1981-82.

May we plead that Budget figures on a constant-employment basis be produced alongside the traditional figures in this and future Budgets? As we showed in a study published by the Institute of Fiscal Studies in 1978, this can be done without great difficulty. Unlike the corrected figures now used, those on a constant-employment basis would be a guide to the restrictive or expansionary nature of budgetary policy.

Thus, it is not so surprising that Britain is in such a deep depression when it is seen that

the Budget balance on a constant employment basis has been changed from -7.4 per cent of GDP in 1975 to -5 per cent in 1978 and to +2.3 per cent in 1981-82. That is a total tightening of 10 per cent of GDP since Mr Hesley did his U-turn. It is a far greater tightening of the Budget than occurred in all the Budget balancing exercises by Labour and Conservative governments in the early 1930s, and it far exceeds the degree of budgetary restriction imposed by any of our European neighbours in the current recession.

Yours faithfully,
R. R. NEILD,
T. S. WARD,
University of Cambridge,
Faculty Board of Economics and Politics,
Sidgwick Avenue,
Cambridge,
February 22.

Hot line

From Mr J. N. Oppenheim
Sir, When it is good, it is very, very good. Yesterday, at noon in Edinburgh, I requested that a telephone be installed as soon as possible and, lo and behold, it was installed and working at 3.25 pm. Your faithfully,
J. N. OPPENHEIM,
10 St Mary at Hill, EC3,
February 24.

A challenging view of trial juries

From his Honour Gilbert F. Leslie
Sir, It is reported (February 23) that in a case at the Old Bailey, in which 15 young blacks are on trial for the murder of a white woman, the jury was "challenged" on the first day. After 40 minutes a jury consisting of three blacks, three Asians and six whites was chosen. On the second day, however, the jury had to be discharged and a new trial begun, because it was disclosed that one of the jurors was related to one of the counsel in the case.

Before a second jury was chosen no fewer than 26 jurors were "challenged" (including white members of the first jury) and a similar time was taken up. The second jury was composed of five blacks, five whites and two Asians. As the law is at present, an accused person is able to "challenge" three jurors peremptorily and thus prevent them from hearing his case. He gives no reasons. His counsel, or he himself, merely says "challenge" as the juror is about to take the oath or affirm, and the juror has to leave the jury-box. But in the course of many years' experience at the Bar and on the Bench, on the North-Eastern Circuit (1932-62 less the war years) I never saw a juror peremptorily challenged, and I heard of only one case in which that right had been exercised. Counsel and defendants accepted what they regarded as "the luck of the draw".

In 1965, when I first presided at a criminal court in London, I was consequently very much surprised to find that "challenges" were common in the metropolis. So far as I could tell, between then and my retirement in 1980, they are usually made because defending counsel thinks that the juror may be intelligent or because the juror is white or a woman.

In view of what goes on in the London courts I have formed the strong opinion, and I know that many experienced judges agree, that peremptory challenges should be abolished. If for any reason it would be unfair for a particular juror to adjudicate in a particular case, the objection should be stated in open court in the presence of the juror and be ruled upon by the judge. I believe that the law should be reformed in this way without delay.

I also believe that the law relating to the qualifications of jurors should be re-examined; but that is another story. Yours faithfully,
GILBERT F. LESLIE,
Reform Club, SW1,
February 24.

'Sale' of Oxford places

From Dr and Mrs B. Ward-Perkins
Sir, The case of Wadham College accepting two students sight unseen (report, February 19), merely on the basis of a £500,000 offer from the Government, has caused interesting reactions in Oxford. In particular there seems to be a prevalent attitude that this is a harmless way of raising much needed money "for the greater good", since it involves foreign students outside the government-imposed quotas for British and EEC nationals.

However, we should like to point out that, long before quotas were introduced, this kind of sale, had it involved British students, would have been considered an unacceptable affront to Oxford's meritocratic ideals. It is not a worrying case of double morality, and furthermore insulting to the foreign countries involved, that we are prepared to do for them what we would not do for ourselves? Yours etc.,
BRYAN WARD-PERKINS,
KATE WARD-PERKINS,
As from: Trinity College, Oxford.

A dacoit at bay

From Dr Jane M. Renfrew
Sir, Trevor Fishlock's account of Malkhan, the present day dacoit "king" in the Chambal Valley (February 15), prompted me to refer to some notes made by my grandfather, Sir Robert Ewenbank, about his capture of another notorious dacoit, Jotia Sardar, in Sanjeli State some time before the First World War, which may be of interest.

Dacoity has been more of less stamped out in British India, but it survived here and there in corners of Rajputana, and Jotia Sardar had created a reign of terror in some independent native states to the north. Once he entered Sanjeli State, which was in my grandfather's charge, he had to be tackled and law and order restored. Sardar's procedure was to visit a village unexpectedly, accompanied by two or three of his gang, and to order a good supper — meat, rice, something sweet, and a bottle of country liquor — followed by a bed and a woman if the headman refused he would walk through the village swinging his sword and lopping off the heads of any children who happened to come in his way, as a foretaste of what might follow. After a couple of nights of Sardar terrorising the inhabitants of Sanjeli State, having murdered several young women, my grandfather would tackle him. With a police force of only six sepoy to help, he enlisted the assistance of all the men of this small state to spread out along the border at dawn armed with any weapons they could lay their hands on — rusty old swords and spears, flintlocks and even bows and arrows — and at given signal to start beating their way towards the centre, examining all possible hiding places as they went. At first a large number of panthers were disturbed, but

European Court judgment on caning

From Mr Edward Baker
Sir, I have not seen the full text of the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in *Campbell and Cosans v UK*, in which I was one of those representing the first applicant when the matter was before the Commission at Strasbourg, but the summary you print today (February 26) hardly seems to justify your leading article's conclusion that the court "specifically refused to find caning degrading treatment or punishment".

The court has apparently adopted the view, previously expressed by the Commission, that in a case where the applicants' own children were never actually subjected to corporal punishment, and where no medical evidence was produced of the finding having suffered psychological or other adverse effects, the mere risk or threat of such infliction, that risk or threat could not by itself involve breach of article 3.

The article 3 implications of the actual use of corporal punishment are understood to be raised in a number of applications presently still *sub judice* at Strasbourg. The question also arose in a case which the Commission disposed of last year under its so-called "friendly settlement" procedure (Case of

Mrs X v United Kingdom, report adopted by the Commission on December 17, 1981).

In the latter case the British Government compromised an article 3 claim arising from a school punishment of "a few strokes of the cane" by paying £1,200 damages to the applicant and undertaking to issue a circular (the text of which, I believe, has still to be approved by the Commission) advising local education authorities in the United Kingdom "that the use of corporal punishment might in certain circumstances amount to treatment contrary to article 3 of the Convention".

The obligations which the Government has thereby undertaken under international law would appear to be unaffected by the court's decision in *Campbell and Cosans v United Kingdom*. It should perhaps also be emphasized that a friendly settlement arrived at by the parties to one particular dispute on the basis of respect for human rights as defined in the Convention, it does not affect the right of other complainants to have their cases heard.

Yours faithfully,
EDWARD BAKER,
23 Salisbury House,
London Wall, EC2,
February 26.

Vatican relations

From the Reverend R. T. Beckwith
Sir, The announcement, now some weeks old, that ambassadors were to be exchanged with the Vatican raises one important point which I have not yet seen discussed. Since the announcement was made without any prior discussion in Parliament, the Government is presumably working on the assumption that it has the legal power to exchange ambassadors without any further legislation to authorise it. The question is, however, has it in fact this power?

When the question of exchanging ambassadors was first mooted, as long ago as 1848, it was envisaged that such a step might be contrary to the Bill of Rights (1689) and the Act of Settlement (1700). Consequently, an "Act for enabling her Majesty to establish and maintain diplomatic relations with the Sovereign of the Roman States" was passed in that year.

However, in 1875 the 1848 Act was repealed, but the Papal States having lost their independence five years earlier. The Act had never, in fact, been implemented, because of the stipulations it made about the kind of ambassador from Rome who would be acceptable, and the British Government had continued to be represented there by an unofficial agent. Even before the Vatican regained its independence as a state under the Lateran Treaty of 1929, unofficial diplomatic representation of the same kind was

resumed, and an Apostolic Delegation was sent from Rome to England in 1938, as to other countries which (to quote Addis and Arnold's *Catholic Dictionary*) "have no regular diplomatic relations with the Holy See". No legislation was introduced into Parliament to authorise this, since none was thought necessary where the diplomatic relations were unofficial.

The proposal now, however, is that the relations should be made official, and ambassadors exchanged. In 1848 an Act of Parliament was thought necessary to make such a step lawful. The Act was subsequently repealed and no further such act has been passed. It appears, therefore, that the action which the Government is contemplating is unlawful and ultra vires. Yours faithfully,
R. T. BECKWITH,
Latimer House,
131 Banbury Road,
Oxford,
February 15.

Lead in petrol

From Dr Richard Axton
Sir, If the government were to set a lower rate of tax on lead-free petrol and their cars would soon be converted. The motor manufacturing industry might even benefit from the breath of fresh air. Yours faithfully,
RICHARD AXTON,
Christ's College,
Cambridge,
February 24.

Human factor

From Sir Ian Gilmour, MP for Wokingham and Amersham (Conservative)
Sir, Unemployment is one of the greatest social and economic tragedies, and at present there are some million unemployed in this country. Yet you managed to write a leading article on the forthcoming Budget today (February 25) without once mentioning unemployment. Even though our must hope that not many readers of *The Times* are on the dole, that was surely a remarkable omission?

Yours faithfully,
IAN GILMOUR,
House of Commons,
February 25.

Sotheby's Belgravia

From Mr C. D. Llewellyn
Sir, Mr Lee's letter (February 25) is disingenuous. Sotheby's Belgravia, as he must know, is emphatically not closing down. Its very success as a business has led to negotiations for the acquisition of larger space adjoining our headquarters at Bond Street to accommodate Sotheby's Belgravia's need for expansion.

This space has happily become available to us two years earlier than expected. Yours faithfully,
GRAHAM D. LLEWELLYN,
Chief Executive,
Sotheby Parke Bernet and Co.,
34-35 New Bond Street, W1,
February 26.

around lunchtime the beaters came to some caves at the foot of a tall rock face and proceeded by a narrow, winding defile. My grandfather edged his way forward alone, pressing against the side of the defile.

As soon as the dacoits saw him a couple of blunderbusses charged with old nails, bits of stone and glass were let off with a tremendous explosion. Having thus drawn their fire, my grandfather tried a new line of approach. The onlookers were set to work to gather dry wood and to throw it over the cliff to make a huge bonfire at the mouth of the cave. Once this was lit it soon scorched them out.

My grandfather, with a sepoy on either side, knelt where the defile debouched on the hillside. First of all a wild-looking dacoit came tearing out of the gorge brandishing a pistol. The two sepoy fired at once and killed him. Then came a second ruffian also flourishing a pistol, the fojdar (sergeant) with the small force shot him in the shoulder, but neither was Jotia Sardar.

After a minute a really horrific figure with a muzzle-loading pistol in each hand and a quantity of daggers and assorted ironmongery stuck in his belt, came bounding towards them; he fired at my grandfather and knocked off his top, rushed at him and took a flying leap over his head. A sepoy caught Sardar in mid-air with a great swing of his sword, and cut his Achilles tendon, which brought him crashing to the ground.

Sardar was taken back to the local town tied on to my grandfather's horse and surrounded by an uproarious crowd surging round. He was then passed on to higher authority and duly dealt with. Yours sincerely,
JANE M. RENFREW,
5A Chaucer Road,
Cambridge.

Mr Jeremy Thorpe and Amnesty

From Mr David Astor and others
Sir, Human rights are being abused throughout the world under widely differing political systems. We believe the world needs an independent body of unassailable integrity to expose these official abuses. It must be impartial, disinterested, and of impeccable judgment. We have supported the efforts of Amnesty International because its work for the oppressed has been conducted in this manner. We are therefore disturbed by the damage done to Amnesty International that may be caused by the announcement of Mr Jeremy Thorpe's appointment to head its British section. In our view, after all the mistakes in which he has been involved in recent years, his appointment could seriously harm the work of Amnesty International. Mr Thorpe has shown himself to be a man of unsound judgment.

Mr Thorpe was chosen by the governing body of the British Section of Amnesty; that body is now responsible to Amnesty's members and supporters throughout this country. We believe that all those who share our view should join in making their opinion unequivocally known to the governing authority of the British Section.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID ASTOR,
PATRICIA HEWITT,
RICHARD HOGGART,
PETER REDDAWAY,
JILL TWEEDIE,
MICHAEL ZANDER,
9 Cavendish Avenue, NW8,
February 25.

Saving bird habitats

From the Director, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Sir, Your profile of the Forestry Commission (February 22) states that the conservationists "know that they need sites for golden plover's nests so they know that they are against deforestation". Not so. There is ample room for further forestry in many parts of upland Scotland; the point at issue is the choice of sites. In Wales and England much less plantable land remains. In Wales a substantial proportion is known to be the best land for forestry; important upland bird communities, including the golden plover.

In northern England and Scotland the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Nature Conservancy Council are undertaking major survey programmes to pinpoint sensitive upland areas and identify the habitat requirements of bird species at risk. But it will require a commitment from forestry interests if integration is to be successful.

So far as existing state for forests are concerned, we are particularly pleased that the commission has embarked on work, in conjunction with our society, to produce detailed guidelines which will enable bird conservation objectives to be taken properly into account in future forest management.

However there are still areas where serious differences of opinion exist, notably over the management of the country's remaining semi-natural woodlands. Of particular concern are the remnants of Caledonian pine forest: the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is deeply concerned by the apparent failure of the native pinewood scheme, administered by the Forestry Commission, to secure the clearance of mature woodland on Speyside which is the prime habitat for Britain's only endemic bird, the Scottish crossbill, and two pinewood specialists, the redstart and capercaillie. Yours faithfully,
IAN PREST,
Director,
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds,
The Lodge,
Sandy, Bedfordshire,
February 23.

University funding

From the Provost of University College London
Sir, Your report of last Wednesday's preliminary discussion by the Senate of the University of London of the University College application for direct UGC funding may perhaps be misunderstood. Such a statement as "not a single head of college spoke in favour" might be taken to imply that at least one spoke against the proposal. In fact, no heads of the other colleges, schools and institutes of the university contributed to this preliminary discussion as they will be having a separate exchange of views on the matter at the Collegiate Council. The discussion at Senate was well balanced, although student members of Senate (not from University College) made a number of speeches against the proposal. JAMES LIGHTHILL, Provost,
University College,
Gower Street, WC1,
February 26.

All in a mess

From Major C. P. Good
Sir, A recently arrived circular has provided us with some light relief. It was addressed to Mr C. P. Good, commenced "Dear Mr Mess," and wished to know whether Mr Mess thought it worth investing 40p per week to get the world's most quoted magazine. Even at this reduced price we think that we shall save our money. I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
C. P. GOOD,
Officers Mess,
1st Battalion The Duke of Wellington's Regiment,
BFPO 811,
February 16.

Saturday Review



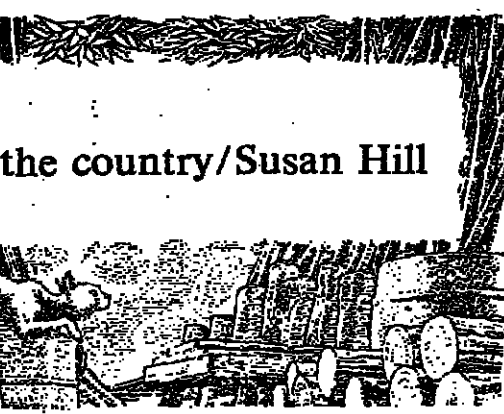
The miracle of Fish Lake

By Brian Aldiss



John Fowles has described Brian Aldiss's new novel, *Helliconia Spring* (part one of the *Helliconia* trilogy) as "the beginning of a new journey to another world — a remarkable feat of the imagination". Already comparisons have been made with Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* cycle.

Aldiss made his reputation with two outspoken and best-selling novels, *The Hand-Reared Boy* and *A Soldier Erect*. But he is best known as one of our most innovative science fiction writers. In working out how people would survive on *Helliconia*, and what the flora and fauna would be like, he consulted scientists: Iain Nicolson on astronomy, Dr Peter Cattaneo on biology, Dr Desmond Morris on biology. The novel reveals a new solar system — and a world disturbingly analogous to our own.



In the country/Susan Hill

Mr Ash, the woodman

"Doesn't answer his door." I went along a scruffy path towards an ugly, green-roofed, pebble-dashed bungalow set in a clearing just in front of the copse, the sort of house that was built just before planning permission was introduced. I was a few yards from the green belt conservation got

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explain that we had a greedy stove and would need lorry-loads of logs. He gave me a pitying look. "Wants to sample, doesn't he?" "Well, yes..." "Let's have a look at 'em." He came inside, opened the top of the stove, blew inside it, banged down the lid. Went outside again, glanced up at the chimney. Nodded. "You don't want nothing green, Tar," he said. "Seven and six," and then another, "Birch," he said. "Nine bob," and then a third, "Apple," he said, "and them's for your hearth, you don't waste apple on that stove. Nine bob."

It is astonishing how completely I have forgotten the L.S.D. system. Seven and sixpence? Nine bob? I don't know how Mr Ash goes on with his shopping for he will have nothing whatsoever to do with the decimal system, and I have a struggle when he leaves the bit of old cigarette packet in the letter box that reads, "Wood £11 17/6."

"Suppose," Brian Aldiss writes, "that Earth took not a year of 365 days to complete its orbit of the sun, but a much longer time; suppose it took, to be precise, the equivalent of 2,592 years — would not almost everything we know be transformed?"

In Aldiss's new novel, *Helliconia Spring*, the planet of *Helliconia* is minutely observed by Earth Observation Station, in which a young boy called Yuli founds a city called Oldorondo. His descendants, while coping with great climatic changes, build up a civilization of a kind and beat off attacks from the phagors, Oldorondo's original inhabitants — a half-breed of half-breed of half-breed with long white hair, horns and gruesome yellow blood. The action takes place over centuries.

What happens when a human race, the phagors, competes for supremacy with humanity? How is that competition resolved when nature requires both species to survive if either is to do so? In this extract, the humans, led by Aoz Roon, Shal Tay and Laintal Ay, rout the phagors — with the help of a "miracle".

Characters and terms

in order of appearance

Freyr-dawn Freyr and Batalix are the two stars around which *Helliconia* orbits in a binary system. Aoz Roon the empire-builder who rules Oldorondo. Shal Tay an early feminist who founds an "academy of learning". Dol Sakil Aoz Roon's woman. Eline Tal Shal Tay's maid. Laintal Ay a descendant of Yuli's who represents gentleness and humanity. Borhenians neighbouring human nation — the enemy across the river. Tenth Ein Aoz Roon's lieutenant. Wutra god of the skies. Ancipitals phagors (the species with two sharp edges — from their two-edged horns). Kaidaws yak-like but fast steeds. Harneys brains. Gillets adult female phagor. Vry an apprentice sorceress. Amin Lim attendant of Vry. Stallons adult male phagors. Oyre daughter of Aoz Roon. Dathka silent friend of Laintal Ay.

Next Freyrdawn, the town was aroused by Aoz Roon's angry shouting. The women, scuffling into their boots to go to work, listened in dismay, and woke their menfolk. Aoz Roon was taking a leaf from Shay Tal's book. "Out you come, damn you all! You're going to fight the phagors today, every one of you! I set my resolve against your idleness. Rise, rise, all of you, get up and fight. If phagors are to be found, then phagors you will fight. I fought them single-handed, you scum can fight them together. This will be a great day in history, you hear me, a great day, even if you all die!"

As the dawn clouds scudded bleakly overhead, his great figure in its black furs stood on top of the tower, fist waving. With his other hand, Aoz Roon clutched a struggling Dol Sakil, who fought and yelled to get out of the cold. Eline Tal loomed behind them, grinning feebly.

"Yes, we'll slay the milk-struck phagors according to the women's plan — you hear that, you idle quemes of the academy? — we'll fight according to the women's plan, for good or ill, I carry it out to the letter. By the original boulder, we'll see what happens today, we'll see whether or not Shay Tal talks sense, we'll see what her prophecies are worth!"

A few figures were emerging in the lane, clattering through the thin ice, staring up at their lord. Many clutched each other timidly, but old Rol Sakil, mother of Dol, cackled and said, "He must be well developed, yelling like that — that's what our Dol said he was. Bawls like a bull!"

He came to the edge of the parapet and glared down at them, dragging Dol with him, still shouting. "Yes, we'll see what her words are worth, we'll test her. We'll test Shay Tal in battle, since you all seem to think so much of her. Do you hear me, Shay Tal? We'll make or break today, and blood shall flow, red or yellow."

He spat down at them, and then withdrew. The trapdoor slammed after him as he climbed back into his tower. When they had eaten some black bread, everyone set forth urged on by the hunters. All were subdued, even Aoz Roon. His storm of words had blown itself out. They proceeded in a southeasterly direction. The weather remained below freezing. The day was still, the suns were lost in cloud. The ground was hard and ice cracked underfoot.

Shay Tal went with them, keeping in with the women, her mouth pursed, her skirts swinging about her thin body. Progress was slow, for the

women were unaccustomed to walking distances that meant nothing to the men. They came at length to the broken plain from which Laintal Ay's hunting party had sighted the Borhenians only two days before the Voral flooded. Here lay the series of ridges with shallow flood lakes between, glinting like stranded fish. Here the ambush could be set up. The cold would bring out phagors, if there were any. Batalix had set, unseen.

They went down into the plain, men first, the women following, in confused groups. All were apprehensive under the hard sky. By the edge of the first flood lake, the women halted, looking at Shay Tal in none too friendly a fashion. They realized the danger of their position, should any phagors arrive — particularly if they came mounted. No amount of anxious glancing about could reassure them on that score, for the ridges restricted their view.

They were exposed to danger and the elements. The temperature remained two or three degrees below freezing. Quiet reigned; the air was hard. The shallow lake lay silent before them. It was some forty metres wide by one hundred metres long, occupying the hollow between two ridges with its unrelenting expanse. Its waters were motionless but still unfrozen, reflecting the sky without a ripple. Its sullen appearance increased a certain supernatural fear which fell upon the women as they watched the hunters disappear over the ridge. Even the grass at their feet, crisped by frost, seemed under a curse, and no birds cried.

The men were unhappy about having their womenfolk nearby. They stood in a neighbouring depression, by another lake, and complained about their leader. "We've seen no sign of phagors," Tenth Ein said, blowing on his nails. "Let's turn back. Supposing they destroyed Oldorondo while we

were away? A fine thing that would be." The cloud of breath about their heads united them as they leaned on their spears and looked accusingly at Aoz Roon. The latter paced about, keeping himself separate from them, his expression blank.

"Turn back? You talk like women. We came to fight, and fight we will, even if we throw our lives to Wutra while we do so. If there are phagors near, I'll summon them. Stand where you are."

He went at a run to the top of the ridge behind him, so that the women were again within

ing; their harneys said "Forward." The sight of thirty human gillots at their mercy decided them. They charged.

One of the three mounted brutes swung a sword above his head. With a churring cry, he kicked his kaidaw, and mount and rider burst forward. The other brutes followed as one, whether mounted or running. Forward they dashed — into the waters of the shallow lake.

Panic scattered the women. Now that their adversary was almost on them, they ran hither and thither between the ridges. Some climbed one side, some the other, making small sharp noises of despair, like birds in distress.

Only Shay Tal remained where she was, facing the charge, and Vry and Amin Lim clung to her in terror, hiding their faces.

"Run, you fool woman!" bellowed Aoz Roon, coming down the ridge at a run. Shay Tal did not hear his voice above the shrieks and the furious splashing. She stood firm at the end of the fish lake and flung out her arm, as if gesturing to the phagor horde to halt.

Then the transformation. Then the moment that ever after in the annals of Oldorondo would be referred to as the miracle of Fish Lake. Some claimed later that a shilling note rang through the frosty air, some said a high voice spoke, some vowed Wutra struck.

The whole group of marauders, sixteen in number, had entered the lake, led by the three mounted stallions. Their rage drove them into the alien element, they were thigh deep in it, churning it up with the fury of their charge, when the entire lake froze.

One moment it was an absolutely still liquid, lying, because undisturbed, unfrozen at three degrees below freezing point.

The next moment, disturbed, it became solid. Kaidaws and phagors all were locked in its embrace. One kaidaw fell, never to rise again. The others froze where they were, and their riders froze with them, hemmed in ice. The stallions behind, brandishing their arms — all were trapped, held in the grip of the element they had invaded. None took as much as one further step. None could fight free to gain the safety of the shore. Soon, their veins froze within their bodies, despite the ancient biochemistries that coloured their bloodstream and protected it from the cold. Their coats, white coats, became further sheathed in rime, their glaring-eyes frosted over.

What was organic became one with the great inorganic world that ruled.

The tableau of furious death was absolute, carved from ice. Above it, white birds wheeled and dipped, crying with gaping beaks, finally making off to the east in desolate flight.

Next morning, three people rose up early from a skin bivouac. Powdery snow had fallen during the night, giving the wilderness a peppery appearance. Freyr ascended from the horizon, casting watery purple shadows over the plain. Several minutes later, the second faithful sentinel also struggled free into Wutra's realm.

By then Aoz Roon, Laintal Ay, and Oyre were on their feet, beating and stamping circulation into their limbs. They coughed but were otherwise silent. After looking at each other without speaking, they moved forward. Aoz Roon stepped out onto the lake of ice, which rang beneath his tread.

The three of them walked across to the frozen tableau. They stared at it almost in disbelief. Before them was a monumental piece of statuary, fine in detail, wild in imagination. One kaidaw was almost under the hoofs of the other two, the greater part of its bulk submerged by brittle waves, its head rearing up in fear, its nostrils distended. Its rider struggled for control, half fallen from its back, terrible in immobility.

All the figures were caught in mid-action, many with weapons raised, eyes staring ahead to the shore they would never reach. All were encased in rime. They formed a monument to brutality.

Finally, Aoz Roon nodded and spoke. His voice was subdued.

"It did happen. Now I believe. Let's get back."

The miracle of Year 24 was confirmed. He had sent the rest of the party back to Oldorondo the previous evening, under Dathka's leadership. Only after he had slept could he believe he did not dream the incident.

Nobody else said anything. They had been saved by a miracle; the thought dazed their minds, silenced their tongues. They trudged away from the alarming sculpture without another word. Once they were back in Oldorondo, Aoz Roon ordered one of his slaves to be taken by two hunters to Fish Lake, to the site of the miracle. When the slave had seen the tableau with his own eyes, his hands were lashed behind his back, and booted on his way. Back in Borhen, he would tell his fellows that a powerful sorceress watched over Oldorondo.

© Brian Aldiss

If you want anything in Barley you go to see Nance and George; between them they can find anyone who does anything, or sells it or sometimes has a bit of this to exchange for a bit of that. They know everyone in the village and for miles around, they relay advice, information and news.

Nancy runs her family and the village shop and delivers meals-on-wheels and is the Secretary of the W.I. George is caretaker of the village hall, a spare-time carpenter and handyman, a keeper of ferrets, shooter of pigeons and crows. He knows where and when you can get bales of straw, second-hand chickens, wire, day-old chickens and green walnuts, retriever puppies, marrow plants and well-rotted manure. He has helped us out of trouble with our septic-tank overflow and a jackdaw-blocked chimney, got us a cheap garden shed and whelped the necks of sick hens. George is very tall and

very thin. Nance is tiny, brittle-looking as a sparrow, have never seen either of them sitting down.

They have a stream running through the bottom of their garden, and, in spite of the ferrets, they rear orphaned leverets and ducklings and injured tawny owls. There is generally a snake-shift cage or wire-run about the place, and a notice on garage or shed door saying "Do not open."

I like to go and see them, they are good people to be with. And so, naturally, when I needed to locate a regular supply of wood for the stove, I went to ask them. "Man you want," George said, "is Amos Ash. He lives beyond High Halk." Right. I reached the gate. "Only trouble is," he threw over his shoulder, "he'll not answer his door." High Halk lies at the top of the ridge that runs above Barley for seven miles and overlooks all the villages of the Fen, and beyond. You go

past the pond and then up a steep slope between overhanging trees, along a track which is a good place for blackberries in autumn and elderberries in June, and where the ground is deeply scored with the marks of horseshoes, for the ridge is a glorious place to ride over. Over a stile, and then, abruptly, you are out on top.

This was a perfect day for being up there, the sky clear and cloudless, so that I could see for miles on all sides. The wind made a high, keening sound. On either side of the ridge itself are open fields, unfenced and at this time of year either ploughed or left to grass. Flocks of plovers were feeding and I saw several pheasants scurry for cover.

I walked past the farm. No sign of a bungalow. So I went back and asked a man mending a post. He nodded towards a bungalow, a copse house that was built just before planning permission was introduced. I was a few yards from the green belt conservation got



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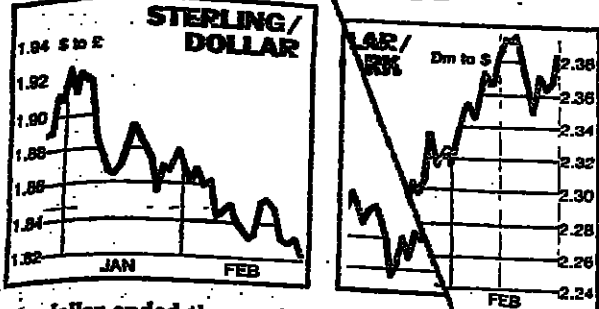
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BUSINESS NEWS

Dollar's firm note



The dollar ended the week on a firm note, high of DM2.39. It was helped by the strong to day's United States interest rates may not fall & view that the time being. The pound rallied from further for \$1.845 but sentiment continues to be at its low of soft oil price. At the weekly tender the rate fell from 13.62 to 13.28 per cent.

Fraser to see panel

Sir Hugh Fraser, who severed links with his Fraser family business on Thursday, says he will of Takeover Panel next week over selling the 4.4 per cent of Britain's largest stores group. He revealed last night that he had received one approach for his stake at Harrods group where trading group Loro had already 29.9 per cent and is anxious to resume a takeover source. That's all I'm saying. The price offered, believed to be 165p a share, a penny less than last night closing Stock Market price.

Engineering orders fall

Engineering orders won by United Kingdom companies fell by 16 per cent in the three months to the end of last November, according to government statistics. After a surge of export orders in August, new overseas business fell by 22.5 per cent over the following three months.

MARKET SUMMARY

Dismal close to account

LONDON EXCHANGE

FT Index 547.3, down 4.5
FT 100 66.39, down 0.47
FT all-share 316.89, down 3.02
Bargains 21,885

Shares of British Aerospace were a weak market yesterday, falling 8p to 175p amid reports of a forthcoming bearish change from brokers Scrimgeour-Kemp Gee.

According to market sources the group may face inland Revenue scrutiny over its research and development costs which at present are taken above the line.

At this level the shares stand at the initial price of 175p offered when the shares came to market a year ago.

Shares in Sangers Group, the pharmaceuticals company in which financier Mr Tom Whyte has built up a substantial stake, have been suspended at 48p pending an announcement by the company early next week.

The group made losses of more than £1m in the half year to August and is expected to announce the sale of a big part of its business.

If Mr Whyte, the former head of the crashed Triumph Investment Trust, decides to sell it will be at a loss. When the first buying shares in September they stood at more than 80p.

Elsewhere Amersham International provided one of the few bright spots as the account ended in dismal fashion after the Prime Minister had apparently dashed hopes of a tax cut on budget.

As the political wrangling continued Amersham rose 5p to 194p and the shares now stand at a 52 premium to their issue price.

The FT Index drifted down throughout the day, closing 4.5 off at 547.3 — a fall on the account of 23.2. With the fall in sterling and the prospect of further pressure on sterling it forecasts of a further slump in demand for oil continues, gilt ended a quiet day with falls of 2%.

Further reflection of the previous day's statement slipped 2p from 325p to 323p while there were losses of 10p apiece for Blue Circle at 480p reflecting the group's Mexican currency problems, and Thomson EM at 443p after substantial selling in the electrical sector which has recently gone out of favour.

But after weakness prompted by talk that profit forecasts were being revised down and that money would be needed to support its Hongkong operation, BSR the record changer group related to favour, up 2p at 78p.

The following announcement by management that it was to cut capacity by closing a factory in the West Midlands with the loss of 800 jobs and transfer

of 1,000 to neighbouring plants. These plants have been on a three-day strike since last October, but the remainder of the group is working normally and the management says that planned expansion in the Far East is on course.

An outstanding feature in the market was the sharp fall at Gill & Duffus 23p off at 143p after the down grading of profit forecasts. This prompted falls in other overseas traders, with Inchcape 7p off at 301p but Loro was unchanged at 74p.

Trading news gave a 5 1/2p boost to development at 189p after record first half figures.

But ahead of results on Monday Barclays Bank shed 5p to 481p, while Royal Insurance, which is expected to suffer increasing underwriting losses as a result of the bad weather in January, shed 7p to 351p.

Speculative interest was given to Guinness Peat after recent substantial changes, and the shares put on 5p to 53p.

Vickers rose 1p to 165p after a line of 500,000 shares went through the market. The cleaning group Sketchley suffered a 16p fall to 272p after news of its planned £22m acquisition in the United States. Meanwhile, European Ferries slipped 1p to 81p after disclosing its plans for a £50 property deal in the United States.

Huntley and Palmer fell 5p to 102p as hopes of a counter to the Rowntree bid receded. Another recent bid favourite, Duple Steel, was also down, shedding 8p to 116p in the absence of any news.

House of Fraser shares reached 172p in early trading on talk that there would be a new takeover attempt by Loro but finally slipped to 166p, a net 2p fall.

With the exception of interest over the Charterhouse bid for CCP North Sea, oil was again weak with Shell falling 10p to 336p and continued rights issue speculation pushing Ultramar down 12p to 378p ahead of figures next week.

Gold shares ended with losses of about a dollar, reflecting the depressed bullion price, while tin mining shares reflected the depressed commodity price.

Shares of Kwik Fit hit a new low of 44p, down 1p after strength surrounding its acquisition of former Firestone tyre depots last year, but with no figures due until May and trade reported as reasonable it appears to be simply lack of interest.

North-East based food and drink retailer Amos Hanton remained buoyant at 320p, its 1981-82 high.

After hours trading remained quiet, with a slight rally in oils but banks, insurances and properties remaining at their closing positions.

Equity turnover on February 25 was £182.783m. Gareth David

European cocoa dealers have been awarded settlements totaling \$31m after taking series of disputes with Ghana to arbitration. Most of the disputes concerned the low quality of Ghana cocoa over the last two seasons. The settlements are mainly discounts on previously agreed contract prices. London cocoa sources said that some Ghana cocoa has been the lowest quality for 20 years. The discounts have ranged up to 15 per cent of £200 a tonne off contract prices. Ghana is making renewed efforts to move cocoa from upcountry areas where it is deteriorating.

OTHER EXCHANGES
Tokyo: Nikkei Dow Jones average 7,548.51, down 31.94
Hongkong: Hang Seng index 1,271.60, up 6.60

MONY MARKETS
Rates held steady. The Bank of England bought £485m of bills at unchanged rates, having raised its short-term forecast from £300m to £450m.
Domestic rates:
3-month interbank 14 1/4-14 1/2
Euro-currency rates:
3-month dollar 14 1/4-15 1/4
3-month DM 10 1/4-9 1/4
3-month FRF. 15%-15 1/2

COMMODITIES
Tin was held at around yesterday morning's support levels by continued consumer buying and intervention by the International Tin Council buffer stock, traders said. But closing prices were still sharply down on the day with cash at £7,140 a tonne and three months at £7,150 on the low registering losses of around £350.

Zinc prices held steady yesterday afternoon on light shortcovering prompted by lack of a downward price reaction to news that United States producer Asarco had cut its zinc price by two cents per lb, dealers said. Three months ended the afternoon at £439.50, a loss of £1.50 stg from the previous afternoon's kerb close.

Furore over Amersham puts BNOC issue in doubt

By Jonathan Davis and Ronald Pullen

The furore over the Amersham share sale has created new doubts whether the Government will be able to complete the planned flotation of shares in the British National Oil Corporation this year.

The Government's financial advisers, already worried about the success of the issue in the light of tumbling oil prices and the continuing depressed level of oil shares, feel that the political rumpus over Amersham has now made their task even harder.

One said last night that the chances of the BNOC issue being completed before the end of 1982 were now only marginally greater than 50 per cent. The Government has been working towards a 51 per cent of the issue for Amersham — the BNOC's exploration and development activities in the North Sea.

The Government's problem is a fixed price offer for sale of the shares to the public. The BNOC's exploration and development activities in the North Sea are the main reason for the issue.

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Dealing on the London Metal Exchange.

Tin price fall angers LME

By Michael Prest

Tin prices continued their nosedive yesterday, provoking anger among dealers on the London Metal Exchange and confusion as to the motives of the operator who returned to the market until the beginning of the week.

Cash tin closed at £7,195 a tonne, £190 down on the day and no less than £1,690 below the price prevailing a week ago. Three months tin, which at the end of last week was £1,000 less than cash metal, ended yesterday £55 higher than cash tin, also a fall of £190.

The collapse followed a similar decline overnight on the Penang market Tin prices there suffered the single sharpest fall in the market's history from £1,333.15 a kilogramme (£7,900 a tonne) to £7,017 a tonne and like London prices reached their lowest for eight months.

Some dealers welcomed the collapse, despite the hectic trading which ensued, because it decisively ended fears of a squeeze, and gave consumers a chance to return to the market. Others were worried that the mystery buyer had changed tactics and by allowing the price to fall was forcing the International Tin Agreement buffer stock manager to buy metal.

Heavy buying of tin started last July when the cash price was about £5,000 a tonne. The buyer is widely believed to be a producer group headed by Malaysia. In November the operator switched from buying forward contracts to cash contracts and the market went into a backwardation where the cash price is higher than the forward. The group is thought to have spent more than £400m.

Some users of the market went short in November, convinced that prices were being held artificially high. As the delivery dates loomed at the end of this week the LME authorities took action to avert a corner.

In the event, the buying stopped, and trading yesterday was characterized by persistent forward selling of up to 10,000 tonnes of metal. Dealers were confused because they argued that selling in such quantity could only come from the support buyer.

LME members said that the fall would have been worse if the ITA buffer stock manager had not bought tin. Yesterday's Penang price was the agreement floor price, at which the manager is forced to intervene. If he buys more than 5,000 tonnes import controls are introduced.

Mr. Gill and Duffus, one of London's leading commodity brokers, said yesterday that its 1981 pretax profits would be between £2.5m and £4m lower than the £16m forecast last October. The board said it would maintain the final dividend at 6.86p gross, but the shares fell by 23p to 143p.

The shares began falling this week after stock market analysts said the company had lost money in the tumultuous tin market. But it said yesterday that losses from tin trading were unlikely to exceed £500,000.

It is stressed that this loss does not result from Gill & Duffus's position on tin itself in the tin market. The problem arose from clients having unmatched positions which Gill & Duffus could not cover at the price agreed with clients without paying out £1.2m.

The board said it was allowed by the London Metal Exchange authorities. In common with other brokers, Gill & Duffus has taken the losses on to its own books rather than pass them on to clients.

More important in the downgrading of the profit forecast is an ill-fated sortie into the American money markets. Gill & Duffus Securities, an American subsidiary, is estimated to have lost £1.5m and will be closed in the near fortnight. Half amount will be taken into the profit and loss account for 1981.

Gill & Duffus also revealed the losses from unauthorized commodity trading in Hongkong, which were discovered last October, are thought to be £7m, about £2m more than originally estimated. At the same time, trading by an American chemicals company and a Brazilian coffee exporting business have fallen substantially short of budgeted expectations.

The group made profits of £20.6m in 1979 and £23.1m in the following year. At the beginning of this week the share price was 176p.

Mr. Gerald Wightman, chairman, said the last year had been spent searching the United States for the right acquisition but it was only on February 1 that Means was chosen. The deal then took two weeks to conclude, he said.

International Westminster Bank, Sketchley has no borrowings so this brings its debt gearing ratio up to 55 per cent.

With the news came a forecast of Sketchley's pretax profits for the year to April 1982 of not less than £6.9m. This is at the top end of forecasts made last year when Mr. made profits of £5.2m. A final dividend of 10.42p gross, making a total of 15p, is proposed but failed to cheer with the shares which fell 15p to 273p.

Increased profits, despite bad winter trading, are still coming through from greater efficiency and tight cash control.

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Allnutt cracks a business problem

By Margaret Pagano

Mr Roger Allnutt is so convinced of the efficacy of his "Alternative Business Thinking" that he offers to refund the £639 fee to anyone who can prove that he is not at least 20 per cent more effective in his business life after completing a three-day course. But Mr Allnutt aged 30, is sure he is on to a winner.

His own performance, I believe the course will enhance a business executive's performance which can be measured in terms of turnover, sales, profits or savings made," he says.

The course, run in a secluded hotel in the Cotswolds, is based on the principle that it is no good finding techniques to improve the monetary targets an executive sets himself, but to improve executives themselves.

This is to be achieved by giving them a sense of well-being, free from the symptoms of our time such as stress, lethargy and apathy induced by the harassments of the business world.

Mr Allnutt, who has run his company in partnership with his wife for three years, believes this can be found in the soothing melody of astrology, homeopathy, the art of relaxation and mind dynamics.

Similar courses have been run in the United States for some time and it was attending one that gave Mr Allnutt his original spur to set up a service here.

"I found their course far too esoteric but realized the value of what was being done," he says.

Last October he set about organizing his own course with guest speakers who include Dr Robin Pryor-Jones, who runs a private homeopathic practice and assists at the Royal Homeopathic Hospital in London, and other specialists on each topic.

So far the three pilot courses booked for March and April have found enthusiasm from a variety of organizations and companies.

Between the talks and lectures delegates are invited to have personal consultations with both the resident astrologers and homeopaths. He believes astrology is invaluable because it is able to identify personal strengths and weaknesses and so situations which would highlight or expose those weaknesses can then be avoided.

Mr Allnutt, says the next project he wants to float is a one-day seminar for women who are suffering increasingly, he believes, from ailments such as agoraphobia.

ACC refuses to name who ordered £1m jet

By Our Financial Staff

Associated Communications Corporation, formerly headed by Lord Grade and now controlled by the Australian businessman Mr. Holmes & Court, has discovered who ordered the £2m (£1.05m) Cessna jet for its Jetsette offshore without the approval of the board.

Mr. Holmes & Court declined to name the main board director who placed the order but said that talks for its disposal are at an advanced stage.

The order was placed last summer, when Lord Grade was chairman and Mr Jack Standard Chartered, is likely to seek Takeover Panel approval next week for the sale of two of its assets, the Classic Cinema chain — valued in excess of £7m — and the Airport Park Hotel in Los Angeles. Panel approval is required because Mr Holmes & Court's Bell Group is bidding for ACC.

ACC's merchant bankers, Standard Chartered, is likely to seek Takeover Panel approval next week for the sale of two of its assets, the Classic Cinema chain — valued in excess of £7m — and the Airport Park Hotel in Los Angeles. Panel approval is required because Mr Holmes & Court's Bell Group is bidding for ACC.

North Sea oil prices are expected to be cut early next week, industry sources said yesterday as Mexico cut its oil prices by \$2.50 a barrel and the International Energy Agency predicted a further drop in world oil demand. The British National Oil Corporation was still considering its response last night to a request for a barrel from Shell and BP for another reduction in North Sea prices, after the £150 a barrel cut 2 1/2 weeks ago. But it is likely to concede a cut of at least \$2 a barrel in the next few weeks, with the possibility of a further reduction when

second quarter contracts come up for renewal. The Mexican move, which will bring its light crude oil down to \$32.50 a barrel, will increase the pressure on BNOC since the two oils are of roughly similar quality. Mexican oil is now markedly cheaper than its North Sea equivalent, which is still officially priced at \$35 a barrel.

The International Energy Agency, which represents most western industrialized countries, said that world oil demand was running at about 7 per cent below its level this time last year.

Our objective continues to be the provision of the best possible international portfolio. At the end of the year half the portfolio was invested overseas.

Over 20 per cent was invested in unquoted shares.

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FAMILY MONEY

Which unit trusts to go for, and why

In the face of falling interest rates — bank deposit rates came down 1 per cent on Wednesday — it is tempting for fixed interest investors to start looking around for greener pastures. Unit Trust Association figures indicate that unit trust investors have done better over the past five years than building society investors, though in some instances by such a small margin you would be forgiven for taking the view that the improved return was not worth the much greater risk.

The table shows the current value of £1,000 invested in the median unit trust in various sectors over five, ten and fifteen years. The median unit trust is the one which comes exactly half way in performance terms between the top of the table and the bottom. It is therefore not necessarily a clear indicator of how the average unit trust investor has fared.

What the table reveals is the importance of timing in equity investments. "Not the UK market is cheap, it may be running ahead too fast," she says. "We think Japan is expensive though the yen may still have some way to go and although the US market is cheap it may still have some way to fall."

Having chosen the sector, the next problem is which trusts to buy. There is no shortage of advice — fund managers, stockbrokers, insurance brokers, investment advisers and unit trust advisers will all make recommendations.

A useful chart survey had just been produced covering all unit trusts launched in 1971/72, analysing which funds within a sector have consistently outperformed, or underperformed, relative to a sector index. It is aimed at the professional adviser but if you can get hold of a copy it provides useful indicators on how to avoid the real losers, if not pointing out the winners.

The survey is called, Fund Monitor and is available by subscription at £105 for four quarterly issues, or £35 for a single issue, from Fund Monitor, Whitehall, Chapel Street, Exning, Newmarket CB8 7HB.

UNIT TRUST PERFORMANCE

	Current Value of £1,000 invested	5 years	10 years	15 years
Median Fund				
General	2,102	2,036	4,473	
Growth	2,108	1,931	3,550	
Income	1,867	2,221	4,293	
N. American	1,595	1,489	2,499	
Far Eastern	2,050	2,912	4,679	
European	1,453	1,514	2,614	
International	1,818	2,015	4,687	
Commodity & Energy	2,339	2,715	4,687	
Financial & Property	2,000	1,678	3,702	
Investment Trust Units	1,305	1,374	1,465	
Preference Share Units	1,270			
Gift				
Building Society	1,498	2,078	2,642	

*net income reinvested.
Source: Unit Trust Association

First National Securities Base rate

First National Securities Limited announces that with effect from 1st March 1982 its base rate for lending will be reduced to 16½%.

First National Securities Ltd, First National House, College Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 1FB. Telephone: 01-861 1313.

THE UNITED STATES AND GENERAL TRUST CORPORATION P.L.C.

The Ninety-Second Annual General Meeting of The United States and General Trust Corporation P.L.C. will be held on March 25th in London.

The following is comment by the Chairman, Mr C. K. R. Nuttall, included in the Report of the Directors which has been circulated to shareholders:

In 1980, when sterling was strong, the emphasis on the U.K. market in the company's portfolio was beneficial. The reverse was true in 1981, when sterling weakened against other major currencies. Net asset value rose by 9.4 per cent, compared with rises of 7.2 per cent in the F.T. Actuaries All-Share Index, 12.9 per cent in the Standard & Poor's Composite Index of U.S. stocks and 34.5 per cent in the Tokyo New Stock Exchange Index (the last two indices are adjusted for changes in exchange rates). Net revenue available for ordinary shareholders rose by 5.0 per cent, compared with a rise of almost 10 per cent in 1980, but your Board sees no strong reason for retaining a final dividend of 7.50p per share, making 11.50p for the year, 9.5 per cent higher than the 10.50p paid for 1980.

Shareholders were informed in December of certain proposals involving a merger with two other investment trust companies and a change of policy to specialise in the U.K. stock market. These proposals will not now be implemented. However, further discussions are taking place with some major shareholders, in order to review how best your Company can respond to the current needs of investors.



Mr James Haswell, Insurance Ombudsman

Tales of woe for the ombudsman

More than 1,500 insurance policyholders have been in touch with the Insurance Ombudsman during the first nine months of his existence, complaining about everything from unsettled household insurance claims to inability to get response at all from their insurance company.

Among the problems dealt with by the ombudsman are disputes over the pre-accident value of a crashed car, whether a ceramic glass cooker hob was covered by a household contents policy, and advice that damage to a house caused by a dog's teeth is not "impact damage".

Predictably household buildings and contents policies provoked the biggest number of inquiries closely followed by motor insurance disputes. But of the 1,500-odd inquiries, only 441 concerned the 44 member companies of the Ombudsman's Bureau. Complaints made against other companies are outside his jurisdiction, though letters from the ombudsman always contain specific advice on where to go for help.

However, the fact that so many complaints fall outside his jurisdiction clearly illustrates the need for an industry-wide service — if necessary with statutory teeth. The Life Offices Association has recommended its members to join either the Ombudsman Bureau, or the rival organisation, PIAS, Personal Insurance Arbitration Service.

But anyone with a complaint against an insurance company would do well to think twice before approaching PIAS. A policyholder who wants a dispute heard by PIAS, first has to obtain the consent of the insurance company (not a very satisfactory state of affairs). If the insurer agrees to go to arbitration, the policyholder has to agree to be bound by the arbitrator's decision and forfeits any right to pursue his case through the courts.

Policyholders who consult the Ombudsman are under no such constraint, can consult him freely and are not bound to accept his decision (though most do). If you have a complaint which has not been dealt with satisfactorily by your insurance company (and always try writing to the chief executive first) you can contact the ombudsman at The Insurance Ombudsman Bureau, 31 Southampton Row, London WC1B 5JH.

To err is human — even inspectors of Taxes make mistakes. The taxpayer who provides the Inland Revenue with all the relevant information may assume that his affairs are in order. But this is not necessarily so, and if the Revenue has made a mistake, the law allows an assessment to be made up to six years after the end of the relevant tax year, or longer if the taxpayer has been guilty of some irregularity.

An unexpected demand for unpaid tax comes as a nasty shock, but if the arrears are due to a mistake by the Revenue, it may be possible to obtain a waiver of some or all of the tax owing.

Following publication of a government White Paper, a system of compensation was introduced in 1971 whereby those on low incomes who suffer hardship as a result of the Revenue's mistake are entitled in certain circumstances to remission of part or all of the arrears.

There clearly had to be some rule of thumb for determining the degree of "hardship" which a particular taxpayer was likely to suffer. So a number of income bands were established, and the remission to which a taxpayer is entitled depends on which band his income falls into.

The White Paper stated that remission would be granted only where arrears of tax arose "because of a departmental error which involved the failure to make proper and timely use of information about his income or personal circumstances supplied by the taxpayer so that he could reasonably believe that his affairs were in order".

It is important to note that the onus is still fairly and squarely on the taxpayer to supply the information in the first place, and he must "reasonably believe" his affairs are in order.

Remission applies where arrears of tax are discovered on or after July 14, 1971. The gross income limits in each band are increased by £2,000 where, at the date of notification of the arrears, the taxpayer was at least 65 years-old, or in receipt of a state retirement or widow's pension.

Remission is available only where there has been substantial delay on the Revenue's part. In practice, it is not normally given where the preceding year is normally used unless a fall in the level of the taxpayer's income is expected — for instance, on retirement.

"Gross income" is not necessarily the same as income assessable for tax purposes. It is arrived at by means of a special calculation which permits only certain specific deductions.

The normal procedure is for the inspector to write to the taxpayer setting out the arrears that have come to light, and the amount of remission he considers to be due. He will also consider any representations made by the taxpayer.

But if the taxpayer still feels that he hasn't had a fair hearing, it is always open to him to draw the matter to the attention of his MP.

Michael Koppel

Alliance extra interest to woo the customer

Alliance Building Society is the latest to offer improved terms on its "extra interest" account. Hardly a day passes without either a bank or building society offering some new incentive to entice customers across the threshold.

From March 1, Alliance is increasing the differential over the ordinary share rate offered on its "extra interest" account. It used to be 1.25 per cent above the ordinary share rate (currently 9.75 per cent) but likely to come down in March, but from next month it will rise to 1.5 per cent above the ordinary share rate giving a return at current rates of 11.25 per cent, basic rate tax paid.

Alliance is also improving the withdrawal facility, making money available on two months' notice instead of three, and there is no loss of interest or penalty if the requisite notice is given. Alternatively money can be withdrawn instantly with two months' loss of interest on the amount withdrawn.

This move by Alliance is no doubt intended to head off any possibility of mass withdrawals when the now inevitable cut in both investment and savings rates is announced by the building societies on March 12. Halifax is also working on improvements to its "extra interest" account and will be revealing details on Monday. Improvements are likely to be along similar lines to those announced by the Alliance.

It is not hard to see why the societies are fighting so fiercely to hang on to their customers. National Savings

has been a powerful force in the savings market, and the banks have been poaching borrowing customers left, right and centre.

National Westminster Bank announced this week a cut in its mortgage rate from 15 per cent to 14.5 per cent, making its home loans the cheapest on offer.

On the mortgage front the building societies have retaliated offering 100 per cent loans. Bristol and West is prepared to lend 100 per cent of the purchase price to first-time buyers who are in regular employment and with what Bristol and West euphemistically describe as "prospects of advancement". And this week London and Manchester Assurance launched a scheme offering top-up loans in conjunction with a building society loan up to 100 per cent of purchase price.

There is, however, a catch with the London and Manchester scheme. The top-up loan is at a fixed rate of 16.5 per cent and must be linked to a non-profit endowment (generally one of the world's buys in the insurance world). In addition the main building society loan has to be linked to a London and Manchester "low-cost" or full endowment policy.

But the coup of the week was pulled off by Leicester Building Society which has launched the Abbey National cheque book facility some time in May or June this year. How long the other societies can afford to stand aloof remains to be seen.

Lorna Bourke

Cashing in on foreign currencies

Foreign exchange markets are feeling thoroughly shaken. Judging where to put cash in the hope of making a capital gain is an act nearer gambling than usual.

"At least if you put your money in dollars there is a good yield. So, if the currency is not higher when you get out, at least you will have gained something," said one foreign exchange dealer, struggling to be helpful.

The odds are on the dollar being the strongest currency, while United States interest rates are thought to be on an upward trend. That, on the other hand, is a difficult matter to determine. Paul Volcker, who as chairman of the Federal Reserve Board is in charge of interest rates, is running a tighter monetary

policy than Mrs Thatcher ever tried. Rates follow the magic Friday afternoon figures on money supply, range up to \$150 billion for the actual out-turn. At the same time the big corporations refuse to raise their interest rates, because they want to give a boost to consumer spending and economic growth at home. The gap between Japanese and United States interest rates is 9 per cent.

And sterling? Still supported by high interest rates — only 1 per cent below those for the dollars in the Euro markets.

All in all currency speculation should carry a financial health warning.

Easing the hardship of back-tax



not normally given where the preceding year is normally used unless a fall in the level of the taxpayer's income is expected — for instance, on retirement.

"Gross income" is not necessarily the same as income assessable for tax purposes. It is arrived at by means of a special calculation which permits only certain specific deductions.

The normal procedure is for the inspector to write to the taxpayer setting out the arrears that have come to light, and the amount of remission he considers to be due. He will also consider any representations made by the taxpayer.

But if the taxpayer still feels that he hasn't had a fair hearing, it is always open to him to draw the matter to the attention of his MP.

Michael Koppel

The best bet for savers

Following the 0.5 per cent cut in banks' base rate, National Savings wasted no time in cutting the rate offered on National Savings Bank Investment Account. NSB has been paying 15 per cent, due to go down to 14 per cent on March 1 and from April 1 the rate paid will be further reduced to 13.5 per cent.

For all but the non-taxpayer, this makes a building society extra interest account, currently showing a return of around 10.75 per cent basic rate tax paid, by far the most attractive proposition.

However, the societies will be reducing their rates when the Building Societies Association meets on March 12 to decide on a new structure.

One per cent (possibly more) off the mortgage rate is a virtual certainty, but there is likely to be hot debate in the council meeting over where the investment rate ought to be fixed.

With a 14 per cent mortgage rate, the probable investment rate, in the days when the building societies' cartel was still effective, would have been 8.75 or 9 per cent. But with most societies paying 1 per cent more on extra interest accounts, there is a powerful feeling among some building society men that the ordinary share rate should be no more than 8.5 per cent.

MONEY TALK

Investors in record bonus

Residents of the North East of England are to be guinea pigs for a new recruitment drive launched Nationwide Building Society. First time investors current account holders of the society who deposit £500 or more are being offered a choice of special compilation recordings generally available from Tellydisc, direct sales organisations whose ads are impossible to miss on television.

The promotion will be launched on March 1 and offer will be available in branches of Nationwide in the North East of England possibly extending to other areas at a later date if the scheme is successful.

Up in flames

Property worth an estimated £34.7m went up in flames during January alone with four fires costing over £1m each. The largest, estimated at £3.5m, was at an army depot in the Midlands.

During the month there were 75 fires costing more than £50,000 of which 23 were in places used by the public, such as cinemas, schools, shops, social clubs and theatres.

Prices static

Latest figures show that average house prices rose by only 0.8 per cent during 1981. The 1980 average house price was £2,087, which rose to £2,102 by the end of 1981, though there are considerable regional variations. This compares with house price rises of 17.1, 23.1 and 15.5 per cent in 1978, '79 and '80 respectively.

Mint on trial

This week the Royal Mint went on ceremonial annual trial in Goldsmiths' Hall. The 1980 average house price was £2,087, which rose to £2,102 by the end of 1981, though there are considerable regional variations. This compares with house price rises of 17.1, 23.1 and 15.5 per cent in 1978, '79 and '80 respectively.

Transplacement

Firms are increasingly finding that staff may turn down transfers to other areas even if it involves promotion because the spouse does not want to leave his or her career. "Transplacement" is the American response to this reluctance to move, explains an article in this month's International Management.

Companies are offering counselling to spouses, using consultants who offer transplacement services and, in some cases, even employing the spouse themselves. Transplacement is largely confined to America but, as the same problems exist here, English companies should also perhaps be thinking along these lines, says the article.

Rock finals

The National Final of the TSB Rock School Competition will take place in Manchester on March 26. Four pop celebrities will have the difficult task of judging the young bands competing for prizes totalling £4,000 and £1,000 worth of musical equipment to be donated to the winning school. The Final is between eight regional finalists and after last year's success, the TSB can expect a large audience of enthusiastic supporters.



Radio one disc jockey Mike Read who will compere the TSB Rock School Competition.

M. J. H. Nightingale & Co. Limited

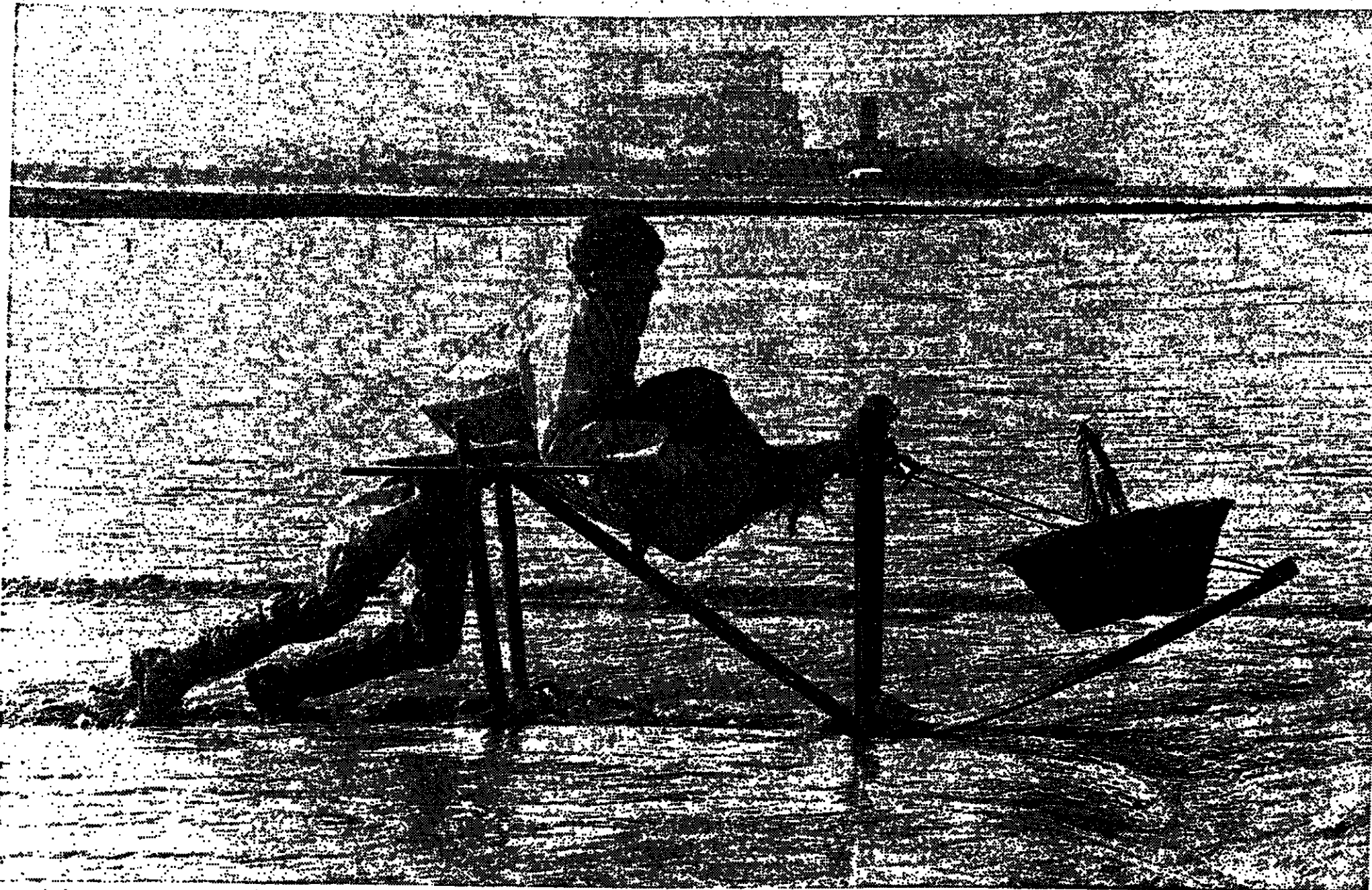
27/28 Lovat Lane London EC3R 8EB Telephone 01-621 1212

The Over-the-Counter Market

1981/82	High	Low	Company	Price Ch'ge	Gross Div (%)	Yld %	Actual	P/E Ratio
124	100	ABT Rides 10% CULS	124	—	10.0	8.1	—	—
75	62	Airsprung Group	70	—	4.7	6.7	11.1	15.4
51	33	Armstrong & Rhodes	45	—	4.3	9.6	3.8	8.5
205	187	Bardon Hill	200	-1	9.7	4.9	9.7	11.8
104	69	Deborah Services	69ad	—	6.0	8.7	3.3	6.1
131	97	Frank Horsell	131	—	6.4	4.5	11.8	24.3
83	39	Frederick Parker	83	—	6.4	7.7	4.2	—
78	46	Globe Blair	52	+1	—	—	—	—
102	93	Ind. Prof. Castings	95	—	7.3	7.7	6.8	18.3
106	100	Isis Cont Preet	106	—	15.7	14.8	—	—
113	94	Jackson Group	97	+1	7.0	7.2	3.1	6.9
130	108	James Burroughs	112	—	8.7	7.8	8.2	10.3
334	250	Robert Jenkins	250	—	31.3	12.5	3.5	8.8
60	51	Scruttons "A"	60	+1	5.3	8.8	9.2	8.5
222	160	Torday & Carlisle	160	—	10.7	6.7	5.1	9.5
15	10	Twinklark Ord	15	—	15.0	19.2	—	—
89	56	Twinklark 15% UL5	78	—	3.0	12.0	4.5	7.5
44	25	Unilock Holdings	25	—	6.4	8.4	5.0	8.8
183	73	Walter Alexander	72	—	13.1	5.7	4.3	8.8
263	212	W. S. Yeates	228	—	—	—	—	—

Prices now available on Prestel page 48146

BOXING



A mud horseman, still riding by

At low tide the Steart Flats on the Somerset coast are an almost impassable quagmire of clinging mud. However, Mr. Sellick manages to skim safely at speed across the treacherous surface to his shrimp nets more than a mile out, half laying, half crouching aboard his "mud horse", an extraordinary wooden sledge used for centuries by local fishermen to reach their distant catch.

Mr. Sellick and Mr. Tony Brewer, both from the tiny hamlet of Stifford, near Bridgwater, could be the last Somerset fishermen to use this traditional form of transport across mud flats. It is not thought to be used anywhere else in the world.

Most days, at low tide, when the sea recedes by two miles across the mud flats in Bridgwater Bay, Mr. Sellick and Mr. Brewer can be seen propelling themselves out to their dozens of shrimp nets staked to 6ft high poles. In the background is the giant outline of the nuclear power station at Hinkley Point.

The men, both in their late forties, spreadeagle their bodies across the upper frame of the sledge, their toes digging into the top few inches of the slippery mud as they push themselves along. On a return journey their sledges will be laden with several hundredweight of shrimps and fish, carried in nets slung from the superstructure of the mud horse, as it swishes over the surface with ease.

The design of the mud horse has almost certainly not changed for hundreds of years when local fishermen, including several generations of the Sellick and Brewer families, used them to make a living. It seems that the design simply cannot be improved; recent attempts to use hovercraft or even motor vehicles to make the same journey across the flats have failed, their engines becoming hopelessly clogged.

The mud flats are a dangerous place for the inexperienced. To walk out, as we did, in boots would have been foolhardy if Mr. Sellick had not been there aboard his sledge. Photographer Nick Rodgers had to be pulled out from thigh-deep mud by Mr.

Sellick, while I finished the exhausting journey bare footed, my boots sucked from my feet by the mud.

Speed is the thing. You have got to keep moving or you will sink. And you have got to move quickly when you are out there because when the tide starts to come back in, it moves very fast indeed," said Mr. Sellick, the father of six daughters and a son he hopes will continue the mud horse tradition.

Craig Seton

Letter from Hillhead Vulgar populism, down by the riverside

A quarter of the Glasgow, Hillhead, electorate has still not made up its mind, the pollsters say, despite the fact that some of the by-election campaigns have started already. This clearly distresses Mr. David Mitchell, the president of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Association. He raises a pained eyebrow when quoted by journalists calling at the secured committee rooms in a pleasant cul-de-sac near the Bellsbray parish church.

"The by-election writ has not been moved yet", he sternly points out in polite, but unmistakably patrician tones.

The Conservatives and Unionists, a different breed from the Desert Rat Tories of the old House of Commons, have held the seat for 30 years and they are quietly confident that they will hold it again, despite only a 2,002 majority in 1979, and the vulgar, populist noises emanating from the Social Democratic Party and Scottish National Party's committee rooms in the vulgar and populist Dunbarton Road, down by the seamy banks of the River Clyde.

The Tories certainly have a good candidate. Mr. Gerry Malone is a local lad, a councillor and solicitor who has come up the hard way; fighting two safe Labour fields in Glasgow in 1974 and challenging Mr. David Steel at long last in the Glasgow, Hillhead, constituency in 1979. Mr. Malone has only two real problems: Mrs. Thatcher's policies and Mr. Roy Jenkins's charisma.

Mr. Jenkins has two secret weapons, both of them Labour stalwarts, extremely well-known and respected in the constituency. One is Mrs. Bunty Urquhart, a former member of the old Independent Labour Party, and for 22 years the Labour Party's assistant organiser in Glasgow. The organising skills of this formidable lady are much in evidence in the spacious SDP committee rooms.

The other secret weapon is Mr. David Welsh, the former Labour candidate in the constituency, and a famous Labour Lord Provost of Glasgow, and a man who should swing the middle class Labour vote to the SDP in the better heeled parts of Hillhead.

Mr. Jenkins's supporters are clearly regarded as traitors by the staff addressing envelopes in the Labour headquarters, a dingy but lovingly tended office that is the only sign of life in a derelict tenement block. Like the Tory workers, the Labour people highly disapprove of the SDP starting their campaign so early.

The Labour candidate, Mr. David Wiseman, has not yet taken leave from his job as a community worker, "but you'll see plenty of him once the campaign starts". We will also see plenty of Front Bench Labour visitors who have the set quality that the worthy but unknown Mr. Wiseman lacks.

After making some fairly nasty cracks about Mr. Jenkins earlier on the Scottish National Party, Mr. George Leslie, has now decided to be nice. Which he is, and a Glasgow-trained veterinary into the bargain.

Of all the four main candidates he has the most leeway to make up, according to the polls. He says that Mr. Jenkins is making it easy for him to improve on his 11 per cent support.

He's broken the old allegiances, says Mr. Leslie, at 42, a seasoned SNP electioneer, "and I fully expect to get 28 per cent of the votes. That's enough to win, and my money's on a recon".

The SNP may portray Mr. Jenkins as an outsider, but the pollsters have found this may not hurt him as much as might be expected. A recent street interview found one gentleman who said he would vote for Mr. Jenkins because he had always been in the EEC himself. But, the perplexed psephologist replied, Mr. Jenkins had been president of the EEC Commission in Brussels.

"Aye", said the man in the street, but he jacked it in, didn't he?"

Jonathan Wills

THE TIMES INFORMATION SERVICE

Today's events

New exhibitions
Carel Wright, York City Art Gallery, Exhibition Square, Mon to Sat 10 to 5, Sun 2.30 to 5; (from today until April 4).
Sculptures by Anthony Caro, Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow, Mon to Fri 10 to 5, Sat 9.30 to 11; (from today until April 10).

Work by Edward Bird, Central Art Gallery, Richmond Street, Wolverhampton; Mon to Sat 10 to 6; (from today until April 3).
Recent paintings by David Holmes, City Museum and Art Gallery, Princes Street, Edinburgh; Mon to Sat 10 to 5, Sun 2.30 to 5; (ends today).
Drawings by Alistair Macdonald and paintings by Anne Smith, Octagon Gallery & Crafts Showroom, 1 Lower Casement, Belfast; 11 to 5 (ends today).
Paintings by Sean Scully, Arts Council Gallery, Bedford Street, Belfast; 10 to 5 (ends today).
A Glimpse of the Past - local views from old photographs, Museum and Art Gallery, Stirling; 10 to 5 (ends today).
Watercolours of British wildlife and landscapes by Ian Rotherham, Edward Mayall Gallery, Sheffield; 10 to 5 (ends today).
One Of Us - original garments by designers including Jean Muir, Sandy Black, Shirley Law, and Past and Present, Ceramists, Bridges Crafts Centre, 43 Barham Street, Covent Garden, WC2; 10 to 4 (both ends today).
Photographs by Mari Mahr, Essex Road, Islington, N1; 11 to 6 (ends today).

National Gallery of Scotland, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh; 9.30 to 1; (ends today).
Recent paintings by David Holmes, City Museum and Art Gallery, Princes Street, Edinburgh; Mon to Sat 10 to 5, Sun 2.30 to 5; (ends today).
Drawings by Alistair Macdonald and paintings by Anne Smith, Octagon Gallery & Crafts Showroom, 1 Lower Casement, Belfast; 11 to 5 (ends today).
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The Pound

	Bank	Bank
Australia \$	2.31	2.31
Canada \$	1.39	1.39
Denmark Kr	16.56	16.56
Finland Mk	8.67	8.67
France Fr	11.59	11.59
Germany DM	4.53	4.53
Greece Dr	117.00	117.00
Hong Kong \$	11.10	11.10
Ireland P	1.27	1.27
Italy Lit	2395.00	2395.00
Japan ¥	155.00	155.00
Netherlands Gld	4.36	4.36
Norway Kr	11.44	11.44
Portugal Esc	130.50	130.50
Spain Ptas	166.64	166.64
Sweden Kr	11.03	11.03
Switzerland Fr	3.68	3.68
USA \$	1.58	1.58
Yugoslav Dnr	97.50	97.50

St David's Day

A National Festival to mark St David's Day (March 1) will be held at the Albert Hall, London, at 7 pm today. Tickets, £1 to £7.50.

The Cardiff Polyphonic Choir and the BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra will play a programme of Handel and Haydn at St David's Church, Swansea, at 7.30 pm.

The Liverpool Welsh Choral Union will give a concert of music by Handel and Mozart at Prichard Jones Hall, Bangor, 7.30 pm.

Roads

Wales and the West: A4: Bath Road, Bristol, greatly reduced in width; A5: Temporary signals at Caerphilly, between Brycheiniog and Bangor Gwynedd; A361: Partially closed, west of Taunton, Somerset.

The North: A629: Roadworks between Leeds and Bradford; A1/A6136: Several lane closures on Catcliffe bypass N York; A654: Long delays at Leamington, N York.

Scotland: A54: Single lane traffic and temporary lights 11 miles S of Coupar Angus during bridge reconstruction; A95: Temporary signals near Granton on Spey, Inverness-shire; A832: Traffic lights operating between Auchtermuchty and Auchtermuchty, the AA reports.

Weather

Frontal troughs will move E across W and central areas of the British Isles.

6 am to midnight
SE, Central S England, Midlands: Becoming cloudy, with rain spreading from W; wind S, moderate, increasing fresh and strong SW; max temp 7 or 8C (45 or 46F).
Channel Isles, SW England: Cloudy, occasional rain, becoming more persistent and heavy in places; wind mainly SW, moderate or fresh; max temp 8 to 10C (46 to 50F).
Wales, Isle of Man, SW Scotland, Channel: Cloudy, occasional rain, becoming more persistent in places; wind mainly SW, fresh, locally strong; max temp 7 or 8C (45 or 46F).
NW, Central N England, Lake District: Becoming cloudy, rain spreading from W; wind mainly SW, fresh, locally strong; max temp 7 or 8C (45 or 46F).
Border, Edinburgh and Dundee, Aberdeen: Mostly dry, but mainly SW, fresh or strong, locally gale force; max temp 6 to 8C (43 to 46F).
Central Highlands, NW, NE, NW Scotland: Mostly cloudy, rain becoming more persistent; wind mainly SW, fresh or strong, locally gale force; max temp 6 to 8C (43 to 46F).
Orkney, Shetland: Rather cloudy, showers of rain; wind SW, strong or very strong, locally gale force; max temp 6 to 8C (43 to 46F).
Belfast, Glasgow and Manx: Mostly dry, but mainly SW, fresh or strong, locally gale force; max temp 6 to 8C (43 to 46F).
Changeable and windy at times. Near normal temperatures.

SEA PASSAGES: S North Sea, Strait of Dover: Wind S, moderate or fresh, increasing strong; sea moderate.

Lowest temp: March 2, 1.1C (34.2F).
First quarter: March 2, 6.49 am.
Full moon: March 2, 10.1 pm.

Lighting up time

Location	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
London	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Bristol	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Cardiff	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Dundee	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Edinburgh	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Glasgow	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Leamington	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Leeds	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Liverpool	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Manchester	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Newcastle	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Nottingham	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Sheffield	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Southampton	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Stirling	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Swansea	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Torquay	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Wolverhampton	6.30 pm to 6.30 am
Wrexham	6.30 pm to 6.30 am

Yesterdays

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud
Belfast	10.5	SW	100
Birmingham	10.5	SW	100
Bristol	10.5	SW	100
Cardiff	10.5	SW	100
Dundee	10.5	SW	100
Edinburgh	10.5	SW	100
Glasgow	10.5	SW	100
Leamington	10.5	SW	100
Leeds	10.5	SW	100
Liverpool	10.5	SW	100
Manchester	10.5	SW	100
Newcastle	10.5	SW	100
Nottingham	10.5	SW	100
Sheffield	10.5	SW	100
Southampton	10.5	SW	100
Stirling	10.5	SW	100
Swansea	10.5	SW	100
Torquay	10.5	SW	100
Wolverhampton	10.5	SW	100
Wrexham	10.5	SW	100

Satellite predictions

Flares give time of visibility, where rising, maximum elevation, and direction of setting. Asterisk denotes entering or leaving eclipse.

TODAY
MANCHESTER: Clouds 1220; 18.50; 19.30; 20.30; 21.30; 22.30; 23.30; 24.30; 25.30; 26.30; 27.30; 28.30; 29.30; 30.30; 31.30; 32.30; 33.30; 34.30; 35.30; 36.30; 37.30; 38.30; 39.30; 40.30; 41.30; 42.30; 43.30; 44.30; 45.30; 46.30; 47.30; 48.30; 49.30; 50.30; 51.30; 52.30; 53.30; 54.30; 55.30; 56.30; 57.30; 58.30; 59.30; 60.30; 61.30; 62.30; 63.30; 64.30; 65.30; 66.30; 67.30; 68.30; 69.30; 70.30; 71.30; 72.30; 73.30; 74.30; 75.30; 76.30; 77.30; 78.30; 79.30; 80.30; 81.30; 82.30; 83.30; 84.30; 85.30; 86.30; 87.30; 88.30; 89.30; 90.30; 91.30; 92.30; 93.30; 94.30; 95.30; 96.30; 97.30; 98.30; 99.30; 100.30; 101.30; 102.30; 103.30; 104.30; 105.30; 106.30; 107.30; 108.30; 109.30; 110.30; 111.30; 112.30; 113.30; 114.30; 115.30; 116.30; 117.30; 118.30; 119.30; 120.30; 121.30; 122.30; 123.30; 124.30; 125.30; 126.30; 127.30; 128.30; 129.30; 130.30; 131.30; 132.30; 133.30; 134.30; 135.30; 136.30; 137.30; 138.30; 139.30; 140.30; 141.30; 142.30; 143.30; 144.30; 145.30; 146.30; 147.30; 148.30; 149.30; 150.30; 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